CHRONICLES OF ERTHIG ON THE DYKE

ALBINIA LUCY CUST

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

STORIES OF THE TUSCAN ARTISTS

DANIEL DEFOE

CHRONICLES OF ERTHIG ON THE DYKE

ERTHIG ON THE DYKE

Within two myles there is a famous thing,
Cal'de Offae's Dyke that reacheth farre in length:
All kinds of ware, the Danes might thither bring.
It was free ground and cal'de the Britaines strength.
Wats dyke likewise about the same was set,
Between which two both Danes and Britaines met,
And trafficke still, but passing bounds by sleight
The one did take the other prisner streight.

THOMAS CHURCHYARD (1600).

"*The Worthines of Wales.*"

ERTHIG HALL. EAST FRONT. ARTIFICIAL WATER

CHRONICLES OF ERTHIG ON THE DYKE

BY ALBINIA LUCY CUST

(MRS. WHERRY)

IN TWO VOLUMES WITH THIRTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

SIMON AND PHILIP YORKE

OF ERTHIG

THEIR BOOK

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

WITH reverence the student would approach these precious documents, dwelling long and lovingly on every detail, the paper, the script, the information historical and political which they contain.

No scholar, alas ! is the Author, ill equipped therefore for so important a task.

Bear this in mind, kind reader, skim not too hastily these pages in easy search for obvious mistakes, but if their contents give you pleasure, think of the weary hours, the midnight oil that has been consumed—for you. Picture to yourselves these letters in boxes, drawers, and cupboards, scattered about the old house, and those already collected gummed in overlapping layers in a heavy brass bound volume

THE FAMILY BOOK

treasured indeed, but hidden and lost to the world.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

A COMMON experience of authors is the difficulty of conveying in words their thanks, not only to friends but to strangers, to whom they are indebted for help. There are always the nameless ones who must read between the lines. With thanks most sincere, the writer acknowledges the kindness of Sir Delves Broughton and Sir Whitworth Wallis, who lent blocks for illustrations; of Sir Arthur Yorke, who looked through the first proofs; of Mr. Charles Sayle and Miss Beatrix Wherry, who deciphered and corrected illegible script; and special mention is due to the use made of Mr. Neobard Palmer's valuable works on "Wrexham" and of Mr. Thomas Apperly (long since deceased), from whose "Reminiscences" have been culled the choicest anecdotes. Last, but not least, come the present owners of Erthig Hall. Mr. Yorke gave free access to his documents, the use of his own transcripts, the benefit of his personal knowledge, besides the greater number of illustrations. Mrs. Yorke collected references, copied extracts, and by hospitable arrangements for the personal comfort of the writer gave practical and sympathetic aid in the construction and final completion of

THE CHRONICLES OF ERTHIG ON THE DYKE.

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* The plate from which this picture was engraved (by Edward Scriven, 1 Clarendon Square, Somertown) has met with some curious misadventures. It remained so long in the hands of a printing firm in Amen Corner, that its very existence was forgotten till in 1884 a member of the firm wrote to Simon III offering it to him at the price of £1 1s. Simon's son, the present squire, was in Town, and at his father's request, visited the offices only to find that they had been burned down the night after the letter was written. A fortnight later the copper-plate, not seriously damaged, turned up among the débris. Being then sent to Erthig it was almost immediately mislaid, and on the day of its rediscovery in the most unexpected way, Erthig Hall itself caught fire and was only saved from destruction by the united and well-organized efforts of both the indoor and outdoor staff.

CHAPTER I

ERTHIG ON THE DYKE

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I

ON Wat's Dyke, facing westward to the purple ranges of Brondeg, stands Erthig Hall, a solid red brick mansion faced with Cefyn stone : "the best in the neighbourhood" is the report of an expert given eight years after it was built, and it stands to-day apparently unaltered after the lapse of

nearly three centuries. At the foot of its elevated terrace flows the Pentre' Bychan brook, once the dividing line between the English and Welsh speaking populations. It is a beautiful land, undulating, well wooded, and watered with mountain streams; but on it year by year the march of civilization has set a devastating hand. As far as eye can see Heaven's blue canopy is dimmed with foul smoke, into smiling valleys are crowded squalid villages, the limpid brooklets are poisoned with chemical discharge, and like a giant breathing heavily in sleep the rhythmic beat of powerful engines breaks the sweet stillness of the summer night. An historic country this, where Celt and Saxon, Saxon and Dane, long contended in indecisive and bloody warfare; Wrexham, it is said, derives its name from "Writhes" a wreath, the wreath of victory won by the Saxons in 1161. But did the Saxons win? Nicholson in his Cambrian Guide gives an altogether different version. He says "a horrible conflict took place in this vicinity about the year 1161 between the English and Welsh. The latter were commanded by Owain Cyfellig, prince of Powys, who was the conqueror; this victory produced the poem called Herlas Owain, composed by the hero himself," and so great are the advantages of blowing your own trumpet that Saxon claims have long remained unrecognized.

Following northward along the Dyke, and within the private grounds of Erthig Hall, is a British camp, a natural elevation modified and altered by the hand of prehistoric man. Now the woods have claimed it for their own; oak, fir, holly, yew, and tangled undergrowth run riot in endless confusion; and above them all the

THE CATHEDRAL AISLE

formal avenues of giant beech trees simulate in the green verdure of their interlacing branches, the Gothic arches of a Cathedral aisle.

But here a temple fair we scan
Which, planted by the hand of man,
Nature's own Architect did raise.

Velvet soft is the moss-green carpet spread beneath, into which year by year Spring with fairy fingers weaves a many-coloured design, "rathe primrose," delicate hued dog-violet, blending imperceptibly with the deeper tones of the wild hyacinth. Everywhere are star-flowers, wood-anemone, and wild garlic; while, suggestive of decay, the grim tooth-wort clings to buried roots. What a spot to drowse away a summer noon! But woe betide the intruder on these haunted precincts, whose slumbers lengthen till the sun's red disk sinks behind the hills. Through Sleep's ivory gate come dreams, dreams strange and terrible, of a long forgotten past, spreading before darkened eyes like the unrolling of an ancient palimpsest. For this is one of Earth's high-places, sacred from earliest time to man's first Divinity, the strong Sun. Here ere ever man set foot, strange woodland creatures, Nymphs and Fauns, played beneath summer moons; changed later in the narrower fancy of the unlettered peasants to Trolls and Fays, the "little people," who are to be propitiated, but never spoken of. Here the Baal fires rose to Heaven, the white-robed, ivy-crowned priest offered the living sacrifice, and chanted wild pæans as he struck his golden strings. All are gone; no longer Trolls or Fays visit their ancient playground, though the traces

of their midnight revels still linger on meadow and lawn. Gone are the grim warriors who gleefully rolled down huge boulders on their foes struggling in the meadows beneath ; gone the fierce priests who cheered them on to victory. Demi-God and Druid alike have passed into oblivion.

No, not all—withdrawn into the seclusion of a little glen, like Saturn when the wrath of Zeus swept from Olympus the Gods of the primæval world—who is that grey and ancient figure whose flowing locks and heavy draperies are stained and frayed by weather and time ?—A Druid, the last of his race, broods in silence and alone.

The scene changes and the Time. Before us is a London street, not as at present with high houses riddled with telephone wires and shaken to their foundation with the never-ceasing vibration of the crowded traffic. This is London, not "small and white and clean" (could it ever have been that ?), but London smaller, dirtier, and much more picturesque, many of the old signs still hanging. This was in Georgian days, when men wore sombre coloured coats, three-cornered hats, and close wigs ; a dress, neat, becoming, and free from the extravagance of an earlier time. Passenger communication was by coach, goods were carried on heavy waggons covered with high white tilts, drawn by teams of powerful horses, descendants of those who bore heavily-armed knights on the fields of Cressy and Agincourt. England was again at war with France ; and peaceful citizens, especially in coast towns, started from sleep, in terror at the possibility of a French invasion. The then owner of Erthig was in Town, very unwillingly, his thoughts turning always

towards his beautiful country home; but he was a loyal Englishman and in Parliament, and in the Militia served his country ungrudgingly and without reward. According to tradition, passing one day a dealer's shop, he caught sight of an object which pleased him; the figure of an old man, of good classical design, not in stone but of terra-cotta and signed by Coade, the well-known maker of Lambeth pottery. It was brittle therefore, as well as heavy, and transport was a consideration. Turning away regretfully from the coveted possession, a familiar sound came to his ear—the now forgotten nursery air and rhyme

Bell-horses, bell-horses, what time of day?
It is six in the morn. We are off and away!

Cracking his great whip, as he slouched beside the splendid team picking their way majestically through the muddy streets, came a carter, his broad face all agrin with delighted recognition, in charge of an empty cheese waggon on its return journey to the Sontley farm. Carefully the Druid was enveloped in straw wrappings, cautiously was he hoisted into the waggon, to the delight and admiration of the gaping throng. The statue reached its destination safely, and £3, the price of carriage, was entered by the Squire in his invaluable pocket-book. This is not the only piece of history connected with the Druid. He has a double, who, set up in the Public Gardens at Chichester, grasps a rod of office in his uplifted hand. The Erthig Druid is mutilated; all that remains of his right arm, rescued from a cupboard, now reposes in the "Family Museum," and thereby hangs a tale:—An elderly labourer, finding that his last hour was at

hand, made the following confession to the parish priest: Many years before, in frolicsome youth, he had essayed to shake hands with the venerable personage, and in so doing had broken the arm. Terrified at the mishap, he buried the fragments and held his tongue. A search made after his death on the spot indicated, revealed the truth of the story; but owing to the rotten condition of the fragments all efforts to repair the damage have proved in vain.

The fame of the "British camp" had reached the ears of royalty. When the second Simon of Erthig was presented at Court, King George III thus addressed him: "Your father does not often come to London, Mr. Yorke?" "Not often, Sire," was the reply. "I am not surprised at it," observed his Majesty; "I have heard of the beautiful wood at Erthig." Erthig estate, which now includes the township of that name and was spelt variously Erthyg, Eurthyg, Erthick, Erthigge, Earthyg and Erddig, according to the imagination of the writer, enjoys the now rare distinction of having remained always in one family, who have resided there continuously, the one exception being the builder of the house. No "landscape gardening Brown" was ever let loose on its formal pleasure ground, laid out in the time of Dutch William after the model of Hampton Court. No bride induced her complacent husband to consign to the lumber-room the beautiful Queen Anne furniture; and if Jacobean, Georgian, Victorian, and Oriental designs stand side by side, Time and Age have mellowed them into the most restful harmony. Some of the treasures of Erthig Hall are older

THE DRUID

than the house, the collection of parchments and letters considerably so, for the earliest parchment dates from Richard II, the oldest letter from the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The parchments relate chiefly to transfers of land ; the letters are grave and gay, domestic and historical. Never intended for publication, expressed in quaintest phraseology, written at a time when letters had a value they have long ceased to possess, they echo through the lapse of centuries like living voices from the tomb. To piece together these letters, to build up a story from indirect evidence, to clear up from a single word or sentence some point otherwise obscure, has an extraordinary fascination for an author. Beside the principals, their relations, their neighbours, their friends, there are a host of minor personages, servants, animals, who live again in these yellowing pages. But the difficulties are great, for these letters have no answers ; so the context is but guesswork ; they are not in sequence, some were lost, some thrown away, there are no diaries with which to bridge the gaps. So while the letters tell their own imperfect story, the Chronicle of Erthig may be likened to a puppet show in which appear many characters, but whereof the standing scene is "the old house on the Dyke."

The Erthigs of Erthig, like most Welsh families, claimed descent from Princes whose origin is lost in the mists of antiquity. The pedigree gives the name of John Erthig, living in 1535 with his second wife Katherine, daughter of John Puleston of Bers, and widow of John Eyton Fychan of Ruabon. Katherine, however, had

no children, and from John Erthig's first wife Deili, daughter of David Llwyd ap Tudyr of Tal, descended in five generations the Erthigs, who for another hundred years made their home at Erthig Fechan (little Erthig), a black-and-white timbered mansion still standing at the beginning of the last century.

In 1671 died Robert Erthig of Vron, who, in default of male heirs, left the remnant of his estates to his daughter Martha, wife of Jonathan Moore, mercer, of Wrexham. The Moores never lived at Erthig Fechan. The house was let to a series of unimportant tenants until in the year 1886 it was bought by the third Mr. Simon Yorke. All except one small corner incorporated into a modern building was then pulled down; a few scattered trees where once stood the avenue, a fragment of old brick and black timber work, alone remain to mark the site of the Erthig homestead.

A century or more before the demise of Robert Erthig, Dr. David Yale of Tattenhall, Chancellor of Chester, had acquired from John and William Erthig a considerable portion of the Erthig lands, and on August 3, 1601, he conveyed the same to trustees for the use of himself, his wife and six sons in succession. Eighteen years later he parted with it altogether to one Richard Davies, "Cittizen and Vintner of London." The numerous legal documents still preserved at Erthig Hall have at present thrown no light on the reason of this transfer, nor yet of the next, by which on September 15, 1619, Richard Davies and Catherine his wife acknowledge the rights of John Edisbury to "13 messuages, 6 gardens, 6 orchards, 2 water mills, 800 acres of land, 200 of

pasturage, 50 of wood, 50 of moor, 50 of heath and bruery, in Erthig, Wrexham, Sontley, and Marchwiel."

Who was John Edisbury? There are Edisburys of Bersham and of Wrexham; but for the history of John Edisbury recourse must be had to the documents at Erthig Hall.

Here, on an ancient parchment (January 2, 35th year of Henry VIII) is the name Richard Edisbury of Bedwal, County Denbigh. Next in order is one Robert Wilkinson alias Edisbury or Edgebury, whose son Kenrick of Deptford Strand was the first of his family to acquire by mortgage or purchases, land in Ruabon, Marchwiel, Wrexham, and the neighbourhood. On September 30, 1624, Kenrick describes himself "as one of the assistants to the principall officers of his Majesty's Navie" and to him may have belonged a certain fire-damaged manuscript containing lists of ships and stores.

John Edisbury of Pentre'r Clawdd and Erthig, born about 1608, barrister at law and steward to Sir Thomas Myddelton of Chirk, married as his second wife, Christian, daughter of Sir Thomas, and widow to Roger Grosvenor Esq. of Eaton, Cheshire. The oldest (with one exception) of the private letters in the collection are those written by Sir Thomas and his daughter.

The first Sir Thomas, founder of the fortunes of the Myddelton family, and the original purchaser of Chirk Castle, was the fourth son of Sir Richard Myddelton, Governor of Denbigh Castle. In 1595 he was committed to Newgate for refusing to serve as Alderman for Queenhithe. With his brother Hugh he was instrumental in bringing an efficient water supply to the growing

Metropolis, and was elected Lord Mayor of London 1613, on the day of the opening of the New River Head. His marriage to his fourth wife Elizabeth, widow of Miles Hobart, clothier, was the occasion for a song composed in his (dis-)honour by the wags about town : "Room for Cuckolds, here comes my Lord Mayor." When the Myddelton family became extinct in the male line the husband of the heiress assumed the name of Myddelton in addition to his own, and three Myddelton Biddulphs reigned at Chirk Castle. Colonel Richard Myddelton Biddulph, the last owner, discarded the second surname, and, reverting to the old order, was known as Myddelton of Chirk. But the name thus revived was not destined to be of long continuance, and failing fortunes obliging him to relinquish the Estate, he died soon after, having, as the saying is, "never held up his head again." The place is now leased to a stranger, and time only will show if ever a Myddelton come again to Chirk.

An execrable hand wrote the first Sir Thomas Myddelton, and there is nothing but its antiquity to recommend his dull letter (omitted here) on the purchase of Cadwgan (Cadogan). His daughter, though equally illegible, writes of things more easy to be understood.

Roger, the first husband of Christian, was a scion of that ancient Norman family who derive their name from the hereditary office of Chief Huntsman. Ralph Grosvenor in the reign of Henry VI married the heiress of Eaton, the present seat of the Duke of Westminster. Emblazoned on a window in Farne church together with those of other gentlemen who served in the Royal Cause are the arms of Roger Grosvenor; but he, coming

unscathed out of battle, fell not long after in a duel by a private hand.

"Keven-y-wern,

"SIR, "*June* 21, 1661.

"I have received yours of the sixth instant and doe assure that I writ my ansure to your former Leater 3 weeks agoe. I wonder how it should miscarry, I sopose being it was directed to your lodging it may yet bye in the Post house att London. I am very glad the monys are paid to my cosen, and I hope he will not deliver the bond to Coroner Whitty before it be discharged. Pray call to Cosin John Myddelton for the 4 shillings laid out for the shues. God be prased, my father is now pretty well recovered. Your mistress is gone to Ruthin with her sister herbert. I intend God willing to keep my Xmas at Eaton. I have no more at present but to desire you to accept of my acknowledgements and thank for all the troubells you have given yourselfe in her conserns who is your much obleaged

"friend

"CHRISTIAN GROSVENOR."

Christian did not long survive her second marriage, and her son, Sir Thomas Grosvenor, was left to the guardianship of his step-father. By an action brought by the next guardian, Hugh Cholmondeley of Vale Royal, John Edisbury was obliged to relinquish this trust together with £160 and "the basin and crewet," the property of the boy, to reimburse also the sum of £1200 in full satisfaction of profit received for his use by Mr. Edisbury or by his late wife, mother of the complainant. Seven years later (1677) John Edisbury passed to his account, and Joshua, his son by his first wife Martha Downing, succeeded to his property.

Joshua Edisbury married Grace, third daughter of Sir Thomas Delves of Doddington Hall, Cheshire, and was evidently very well thought of by his wife's relations. All the Delves circle corresponded with him, Delves's, Wilbrahams, Mainwarings, Kynastons, Gleggs, besides Sir John Wynn and others.

There are more than a hundred of these Delves letters, and were they all of equal interest they would have made a volume in themselves. As it is, a few extracts will serve to give a glimpse of some of the more important members of the circle.

In his introduction to "The Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke," Mr. Philip C. Yorke gives an inspiring picture of England in the eighteenth century, dwelling much on its classical qualities, the dignity, the repose, the deeply religious feeling which influenced the lives of individuals. Here in the last years of the preceding century it is indeed far otherwise, and the abiding impression is one of foreboding and gloom. Hardly a man among them but was constantly in hiding from importunate creditors; and, while conventional religious phrases flowed glibly from their pens, there was never in their hearts a thought of pity for the innocent victims of their reckless prodigality.

Mr. Thomas Delves was ready to marry anybody so long as money was brought into the estate, and the letters of Ralph Wilbraham point surely to the reason why there are no longer Wilbrahams at Dorfold Hall.

The correspondence of the elder Sir Thomas, brother-in-law of Edisbury, is chiefly in relation to Bishop's tythes though he and most of the correspondents were

constantly tasking the good nature of Mr. Edisbury by shopping commissions of various kinds.

Sir Thomas's first and only letter to his sister has no date, but from its contents it may be inferred that Mrs. Edisbury at one time kept house for her brother at Doddington; at the same time perhaps she received a charming note from Christina Wilbraham—dated, as will be seen, many years before the building of Erthig Hall.

"Deare Sister,

"I hope before this tyme you have received both my letters which certified of our coming to Bath, but of the efforts made by using it, little account can yet bee given by reason that pumping hath so disordered my head it is little lesse than a wonder if my letter contayns anything of sense, except it bee that of your kindnesse so much expressed to mee in everything that whilst any outward sense remaynes in mee there will bee no want of the inward sense or remembrance there.

"I lately saw Mr Herbert son to her you know here, who tells me his mother is well, and that Mrs Blanch Morgan is well recovered of an ill fitt she had here, a little before our coming to this place. I hope to see you before the Assizes and shall stay here till the latter end of nexte weeke, hoping to receive one letter more here, before we think of returning home, and in the meane tyme desire you to buy what is needfull for the home, at Chester fayre if money can be either had or disbursed, which with service to all relations, tell you I am

"Your very affectionate Brother

"Tho. Delves.

"My ffather Ravenscroft's service to yourselfe and husband."

"These for Mrs. Edisbury att Doddington.

"Honored Cosin, "*April* 13, 1668.

"the short experience I had of your company would have rendered it very grateful to mee when since I may not be soe happy as to enjoy here, I shall endeavour to take an oppurtunity to wait upon you at Doddington to return my humble thanks for the favour of your sweet society, ingenius lines, and noble messengers whereby you express yourselfe highly sensible of our loss and frendly above the merits as much as the expectation of her that gives you and your husband her owne and Mr Wilbrahams best services and earnestly desires to be accompted,

"Your affectionate Cosin and humble sarv[t]

"Christina Wilbraham."

Extract—Sir Thomas Delves *to* Joshua Edisbury

"*Jan.* 29, 1693.

"Pray gett me a hogshead of good Clarett if you can at 15/-, for I am told you have mett with very good at that price, and I pray let me know what the last Clarett Sacke you bought for me did cost, for my wife knowes not what is owing for I have sent by Lieutenant [ ] who will bee with you this weeke a patterne of the bignesse of my head, for a blackt hatt, besides the beaver hatt you were to buy for me, I have onley dues to you, and Betty's from selfe, wife, Sister Shelly, who goes to her new house this weeke, with my son and Ermin,

"Ever remaining your much obliged brother,

"Thomas Delves."

His son Thomas, in spite of his recent widowhood, was exceedingly interested in everything concerning his appearance, much more so indeed than in a second

SIR THOMAS DELVES
Original at Doddington Hall, Cheshire

marriage, which question, however, was of untiring interest to his relations and friends.

MR. THOMAS DELVES *to his Uncle*

"*April* 28, 1694.

"SIR,

"This is in the first place to returne you many thanks for your kind enquiries, after mee, and then to begg pardon for my long silence, which I hope your goodness will excuse, being, I am conscious to myselfe a very ill scribe. My Father, Sir, has been soe kind as to present mee with a very fine embrodered Sadel, I must therefore begg the favour of you that you woud gett mee a [ ] to put behind the Saddle imbroder'd with the same kind of worke of the newest fashion; I have sent you a Houlster cap imbroder'd, by which the Sadler will see how to make the other answerable to itt. I also desire that you would procure mee a new Bridle bitt, Crupper, Breastplate, and Sterropes, to shute with the Houlster. I must likewise begg that you chuse mee a new long Perrewig from Mr Parrey, which will cost 7 or between that and 8 pounds, if it be of my couller.

"My Lady Knightley hath moneys of mine, and I will get her to pay you what these things will cost: pray let mee know particulars in your next, if you can.

"Sir, the Lincolnshire Lady, whose name is Sanderson, is, I heare, very worthy, but resolves not to marry againe; yet if you can heare of a country lady whose character is good, and has fortune so greate as this estate doth require, in our present circumstances it will be a favoure. If you please to let me know it.

"Sr Your most obliged Nephew and
humble servant "THOMAS DELVES.

"My Father and Lady give you thare servis.

"The Houlster comes by Badely and will bee at the

Swan with two necks in Lad lane the 5th of May bee pleased to send for it."

Extract—Sir Thomas Delves

"Dodington,

"Deare Brother, "*May* 30, 1694.

"I am now to excuse that my wife (by reason of Company here) doth not write to Betty Glegg by this post, but enjoynes mee to intreate your letting her know that my son hath written by this poste to his Taylor, to bring unto her some patternes of Cloth, for to Choose which Colour will bee fittest to have silver embroydered upon it, and according to what way of worke shee fancyes, and thinkes to bee most fashionable, hee would have it done as soon as may bee and the Taylor will bring her patterne of both Cloth and silke for wastcoate, which latter is not to exceede much above 30 shillings per yard, and to bee as the fashion is worn; but of this no hint is to bee made, eyther to Lady K., or to any of that family. I pray you forgett not send on the next box to my son all the late printed publick Acts of last Sessions for I want much to see some of them, and wrote not long since, to desire your sending them. I thanke you for your last newes, and kind letter, * * "

Thomas Delves *to his Uncle*

"Dodington,

"Sir, "*June 6th*, 1694.

"I have receaved yours, of the 29 of May, and now all the things belonging to the Sadle are come safe, with A fley for a Pike; and I returne you many thanks for your extraordinary care paines aboute them; I can not allso be un-mindfull to pay you my just acknowledgements for ye good wishes you ar pleas'd to give for the prosperity and increase of this family, indeede I coud now

have an inclination to change my condition, could I meet with one to my likeing; The Lady I tould you of I have not yet seene, nor heard anything more of than what I wrote in my last; but if you know Mr. Bennit that married Sir Richard Middelton's sister, you may bee satisfide of all particulars, hee being a greate acquintance of Sir Thomas Willowbey's. Sir, I have made choyce of my Cozen Glegg's fancey, for A patterne of imbrodery, to bee put upon the pockets and slives of A new coate; I allso have desir'd A silke for A wastcote of her likeing, the price to bee 30 shillings per yard or thereaboutes and if fringes bee very much worne, I desire to have one to the wastcote. I have monnys ready in towne, and will pay for it all as soone as the bills are sent. My taler, Mr Clarke will send the shape of the pockets and slives to Cozen Glegg as soone as the cloth is pitch'd upon; Which, with service to her, begging the you will accept of ye same yourselfe, concludes from your most obliged nephew and servant,

"THOMAS DELVES.

"My Father gives you his servis and thankes you for your Letter; My Lady alsoe gives servis. My servis to Cozin Robert Glegg, and wish him joy from mee."

"Dodington,

"SIR, "*May* 19, 1694.

"I receaved yours of the 15th, instant, and return you many thanks for your packet and care aboute the things I desir'd, and hope that thay will bee here today, and since you say that there is some allteration in the fashion of Houlsters, I desire that you would send mee 2 new ones strip'd according to the newest mode, and allso A peace of new steerrops, with leathers to them, such as are worne; the inclos'd note will tell you the true dimensions of the old houlster pipes, that the new ones may shute with the pistall's. Pray Sir, bee pleas'd

to send these things by the next carrier. I have order'd more monnys to my Lady, soe I hope shee may pay for these things, if you call upon her, If not I will pay you, when you come downe. Sir, As to your enquirey after A Lady, that may bee sutable, to my liking, I must owne and acknowledge your greate favour in it; yet I think £6000 is not soe much, as I should wish in my circumstancys; I have heard of A yong Lady nere Nottingham, worth ten thousand pound, who (If all I have heard of her bee true) is most likely; Shee is Sir Thomas Willoughby's Sister, and lives at Wollerton; It is said that shee hath keep't her brother's house severall yeares, and hath alltogather bin used to A countrey life, If you please to enquire what you can aboute this Lady, I shall esteeme as A greate kindness, and to add to your former favoures confer'd upon, Sr, your most oblig'd Nephew and Servant,

"THOMAS DELVES."

Hugh Delves, who lived at or near Dodington, acts frequently as scribe for Sir Thomas, though to judge from his handwriting he could hardly have been engaged as his permanent secretary.

"have been with Sir Thomas a whole weeke" he writes on February 15th 1693, "I thank God hee and my Lady is vary well I have not seene Sir Thomas so Harty not this great while. And very merry have we beene all this week consulting and thinking what choyce lady for Mr Delves And after strong debate wee came to the poynt which past between us" (here the manuscript becomes illegible) "that vertuous and honourable Lady will make a good Country lady and one we hope as will not love London but stay in the County. I hope she is under 29 years of age."

On March 21st of the same year Hugh Delves again writes to Mr. Edisbury.

"*March the 21st*, 1694.

"SIR,

"I received your Letter dated the 15th of this instant March; I doe beg your pardon that I make this excuse for my silence and in regard I write once to you since you went to London in which Letter there was sum bisness for Sir Thomas Delves included; Sir, I find by Mr Delves he hath not much inclination to marrey as yett, but Sir Thomas woud very faine have him to fixe his affections to marry into som good ffamily if itt plese god for the propagating of this familey, theire hath beene severall Ladyes motion'd but hee att present seemes most inclined to a dawter of Sir George Warberton's, by his last Ladys, provided she bee A good vertuous Lady and hath a good Carritor, and one that doath not love London.

"Shee must have 6 or 7 thousand pounds att the least; all which Inquirey qualiffications if you can certify in a private Inquirey to Sir Delves, hee will not faile but acknowledge this as well as all other kindness from you . . ."

THOMAS DELVES *to his Uncle*

"Dodington,

"SIR, "*June the 18th*, 1694.

"Yours of the 14th came safe to hands, and I give you and my Cosin Glegg my humble servis, and thanks for youre greate care aboute the things I desir'd; I have order'd my Cosin Joseph Sheppard, or his Brother If hee is in towne, to pay to my Cosin Glegg soe much monnys as my Cloathes and what you have laid oute for mee, shall amount too. I could not tell him just the some, because I had not the bills, but I am sure hee

hath monnys enugth of mine to discharg all. My Father gives you his servis, and bid mee tell you that hee shall bee att Chester the begining of nexte weeke, and aboute the middle at Geaton, I desygn (God willing) to goe alonge with him ; and If I can bee soe, happy as to see you in the countrey quietly, I shall waite upon you in my returne at Earthig. Pray make what hast you can into the countrey, for Grouse time will bee here quickly, and Mr Baly longs for your coming. Pray, Sir, If you can heare of a good handsome pad gelding that goes easy, will you let mee know. I doe not heare by your last that you have had any accompt aboute Miss Willowby, who I can hear nothing more of, the Character I have allready had of her is from Mr More, a Painter. Which at present concluds from, Sir, your most oblig'd Nephew and Serv't

" Thomas Delves.

" My Lady Delves gives you her servis."

While so much attention was directed to the matrimonial affairs of Thomas Delves, his sister Elizabeth was by no means forgotten.

" Nephew Delves and proposalls from Sir Erasmus Phillips " is the endorsement on young Thomas Delves' last letter, and with the letter came a formal catalogue of qualifications of an eligible man. The last clause runs thus " The young gentleman has had the benifit of seeing many foreign countries without receiving any taint thereby, has always delighted in books, is extremely good humoured, in a word we know his character will bear the nicest scrutiny." These proposals made through Mr. Edisbury were rejected by the family and brother of the young lady on the ground " that they would

treate with none till she be eighteen years of age." The last Sir Thomas made no second marriage; but, dying childless, Elizabeth became heiress of Doddington and married Sir Bryan Broughton, who assumed the name of Delves in addition to his own.

Dorfold, the beautiful home of Ralph Wilbraham, is still the wonder and admiration of the privileged few; but Ralph, the son, and presumably the heir of P. Wilbraham (another correspondent), could have had little pleasure in it, being always in debt, and apparently on bad terms with his family. Father and son were both sportsmen and wrote about shooting dogs, and the latter also about a certain falcon of Mr. Edisbury's, a bird that must have been a valuable one, to judge by the number of persons concerned in the curing of it.

A third Mr. Wilbraham lived at Tilbury, and having too bad a cold to travel to town begs that his friend "will reveale himself by water." The letters are quaintly worded and still more quaintly spelt, Ralph Wilbraham in particular, while sending greetings from his wife always spells it "wives," thus giving the impression that he possessed a harem instead of one lawful spouse.

"*Jan. the* 14, 1692.

"DEARE SIR,

"Yesterday my Father set out towards London and I believe will be there about Wednesday next, therefore I thought it good to give you notice that if you have an opportunity whish I question not but you will to beg of you to use your interest with him to hasten to put an end to my tedious confinement. 'Tis now a

year since I have had the benafet of going to Church which you may easily imagine is no small agravetion of my troubles that I am excluded that happiness: for when I go to take the advantage of a little air for my health sake they preach mostly in Welsh so that I lose that conveniency. Pray take no notice that you have heard from me but discourse him as it were of your own accord and let me heare as soon as you can what he intends to doe with mee and what course and method hee intends to follow now this Act of Parliament is got, Which with mine and my wives faithful service to you and cousin Glegg is all the trouble at this time shall be given you by

"Your most Assured faith full and
humble servant whilst
"Ralph Wilbraham."

Ralph Wilbraham *to* Joshua Edisbury

"*November the 9th*, 1692.

"Deare Sir,

"On Monday last I rec'd the Box of Tobacco safe, but not in time to give you an account of it per that daye's Post, which otherwise I had done. I receiv'd also a Letter from Cousin Glegg the last week, and have showed my Sister the contents of it; she returns her many thankes for her trouble, and has a great desire to see the colour, if my Cousen could put a Little bit of it in a Letter, and to know whether 'tis water'd or noe; she also beggs the kindnesse of her to send word what the Dying comes to, and the making of her Tippet, that she may send Money up for them, and when you write if you'll send word what the Tobacco comes to it shall then also be sent. You forgot the Hungary Water and black paper which I desire you to send as soone as may be. All here, I blesse God, are well, onely my Aunt

Grace is much out of order, and my Wife very often trouble'd with the Tooth-ache, and if I mistake not somewhere near your Lodgings I read in the Gazette that there is an excellant powder for the Tooth-ache sold, if you can heare of it pray send me some, and directions with the Hungary Water, &c. You may see I observe your orders in not begging my excuse for all this Trouble I give you, onely desire you to give all our services to Cousin Glegg, and myne to the Dr, and accept of the same to your selfe.

"I am your most assured servant,

"RALPH WILBRAHAM."

Extracts—R. WILBRAHAM *to* J. EDISBURY

"*Feb.* 28, 1693.

"I returne you many thanks for your last kind Letter and am much troubled to heare my brother Walthalls business meets still with Rubbs but am still in hopes it may be done, I should be very glad to heare whether you had any discourse with my Father about my Concerne and whether there be any hopes of my Enlargement, if this Act succeed, Creditors are now very brisk and what he intends to doe is wholly kept hid from me, to the no little increase of my Trouble and my Friends are very few that I find, which makes me so troublesome to yourselfe who are truly the only Friend I have that I can at this Juncture confide in which I hope without the least shadow of Compliment will make my excuse. . . ."

"Dorfold,

"DEARE SIR, "*April* 18, 1694.

"I was very glad to heare by your last post that you received my letter safe about your Oar and I heartily wish you a good Chapman for it. I was very much concerned when I heard that when you sent for the

Setting Dogg mine was parted with but I believe my father sent you full as good a one for Partridge and by all that have seen him hunt and sett he is said to be an excellent dogg either in sight or out of sight but for my own part I never saw him sett or hunt but I have heard my brother Walthall say he must be closely followed in hunting or else he would bee too madd at the first is all that I can learn of his qualities."

"*April* 21, 1694.

"DEAR SIR,

"Yours I received last post and am truly sorry that we have given you so great a trouble to so little purpose my sister was in hopes she would have spoke with you but seeing she is so we must resolve on some other course I wrote you word on wednesdays post of all the qualities I knew or heard of that dog my father sent and yesterday discoursing with my father about him he bid me send you word that he is an exceedingly high hunter and a great flyer out in inclosures so that he often lost him but was if he lost him always sure to find him sett, he also bad me tell you he always stands when he setts and setts pretty near without any words and he thinks there cannot be a better dogg for a champion countrey in England.

It was not the relations only, but the friends of Mr. Delves that busied themselves so mightily about his matrimonial affairs. There was Mr. John Hunt, for instance, whose precise self-conscious script suggests the legal adviser (the fading of the ink makes it now almost illegible). He writes thus to Sir Thomas concerning his heir: "I understand that God's providence has bereft your son of his lady and wife and with her, of the hopes of an heir made by her who may rise up in

his and your place. It makes not only me but others that are well-wishers to your family, to sopose that as soon as it is consistent with decency you will incline your son to a second marriage." After this he goes on to recommend the eldest daughter of Sir Willoughby Acton "who, as the daughter of a Mother of many children, will in all likelihood follow her example."

Sir John Wynn's candidate, on the other hand, was a fortune, being (it would appear) the daughter of Sir Josiah Child, a writer on Finance and Governor of the East India Company. The drawback in her case was the condition of her health, and from the supposed nature of the disease it may naturally be conjectured that the lady was not in her first youth.

SIR JOHN WYNN *to* JOSHUA EDISBURY

"31 *Oct.* 1695.

"HOND SIR,

"I found out a gentlewoman, a relation of my Lady Childs and here she is mostly when in town and that does her business for her here. She has undertaken to acquaint my lady with this affaire in a few days. She being now att a place called Cannon being more distant from the towne than her usual residence at Wanstead. She tells me of very great offers made the young Lady, such as an only son of 4000 per ann. expectancys, that her brother being an only one hath 7 or 8000 per ann. having had 1000 per annum with his Lady thus rendering the affaire difficult and If you send an affidavit it must be of your being quietly possessed for above three years past untill the disturbance made by John Cooper George Norman and their Agents or Servants and I wish you a happy account of your affaire

when you goe to Flintshire and am your faithfull servt

"JOHN WYNN.

"You must be pleased to allow convenient time for this great affaire."

"*Nov.* 2, 1695.

"HONP SIR,

"My Lady Child does not come to her seate att Wanstead till the beginning of next week and its impossible for me to give you an account of that affaire till the latter end of next week being about that time to be in towne. I was speaking to the Dr about the Hall, and telling him that in case the graunt did not go on he might try to get one for you but if it did, that he might sell to take in a graunt of them only under the guarantee. The Dr says he did not understand yours [——] and ordered me to lett you know it and theres great hopes of a Whigg Parliament and the King is expected here.

"I am, Sir, Your faithfull servt

"J. WYNN."

"*Nov.* 22, 1695.

"HONP SIR,

"I received your last intimateing the information you have of the Lady's having a cancer which I shall endeavour to inform myself off, though an infirmity of that nature is commonly kept very secret. As to the other matter you are pleased to honour me with, I have often seen the lady and know her father as I take it being Col. [——] and she lives at St. James with her brother Mr Harrison that married her sister. I have been told they were coheiresses and the estate 400 a year a piece. At other times I have known her represented as having 600. She had the character of a pious Lady

and to be well tempered as most Ladys are before they are marryed, tho' her face in my opinion doth not much promise it. What account you command from me is difficult to be gain'd and not to be thoroughly had, but from a Confidant of hers, yet to obey you, am not out of hopes of offering it but cannot do it by my neighbour you mention, yet will use all the caution imaginable in it, though to break off for a [ ] was very odd for a person of the Drs. good humour and sense, for if she lov'd him, and found it uneasy to him she could not insist on the Covenant * * * * "

THOMAS DELVES *to* JOSHUA EDISBURY

" Doddington,
" *Nov.* 30, 1695.

" SIR,

" I received your letter and tender you many thanks for your industry in my business, which (I hope in God) will succeed well. All ye reproaches given out of the Lady being faulse, which I was fully satisfied in by Mr Lankester's freind, eer yours came to my hande. Sir Jo. Mainwaring dined heare yesterday on his joyrney towards London, who I understand is acquainted with Sir Josiah Child and he hath promised both my Father and mee that hee will assist me what he can in this affaire; In the meanwhile hee desires that you would let him know where he may find your freind, and thinks it propper that he and none else should goe along with him to the Lady C. Therefore let me intreate you to write to Sir John in that particular per next post; at which time I shall write to him my selfe at large, and acquaint him with what I would have done; soe that I guess if the answer be incouridging some 10 days hence I shall designe a London Joyrney, and shall be glad if you bee at leisure, to shake your hand at Dodington, ere I goe. My Father and I have both had letters from

Doctor Edisbury with a proposall of a match for Betty the particulars of which you will find in the enclosed. Our answer to itt was, that we would treat with none till shee came to be eighteen years of age. My father gives you his servis, and desires you will excuse his not answering your letter, writeing being troublesome to his eyes. Mr Savidge doth heare of a servant that may be propper for you, for a stuard if you want one having bin in place for 20 years. Bee pleased to send all my enclosed papers back, when an opportunity is offered, which with service to Cosen Glegg and the rest of friends concludes from

"Sir, Your most obliged Nephew,
"Thomas Delves."

A sister of Mrs. Edisbury's married a Glegg and a close intimacy subsisted between the families, so much so, in fact, that although Joshua Edisbury wrote and received his letters at various Inns or Coffee Houses, it is possible that he actually made his London home with his wife's relations. The younger Glegg seems to have been as unfortunate or as prodigal as his Wilbraham cousin, and equally to have relied on the generosity of his Uncle, and it is impossible without the context to unravel the meaning of Hugh Delves' last letter which still appears to concern Mr. Delves' marriage. An abortive matrimonial project for his own daughter Ermine is the subject of some of the letters, too intricate, however, in their fragmentary condition to be worthy of repetition. So remotely are the letters in this series connected with the story of Erthig Hall that any selection and arrangement of them must to a great extent be arbitrary.

"London,
"*May the 7h*, 1695.

"Hon^{D} Sir,

"I have at last made up the account with Mr Hickon. As well as I can tell, the Lace he sould theire was dew to him on the Bond, when my Brother went off £445, since which I have paid him £105, £20 of which was for interest and £85 prinseaple, so theire remains dew only the bond £360, besides which he hath a box of Lace valew about £70 which would yeild more if Silver Lace weire worn, as much as it hath been however I doe not much feare; but it will yeild that, tho' silver lace is a very great drug,—Still; the rest of the Lace etc., which is not yett sould but I hope will yeild near 30£ when sould but when that will bee, I cannot tell for traid 's soe dull, I can gett noe body to looke at them and I am not willing to sell them for a songe in hopes there will yeild a better price. I have also sent the whole account of what I have received and paid, which account seems in several places to bee very extravagant, and a great deal of money paid which I could not help, considering the Occasion, when all are sharpes one hath to do with all but what I did I thought it was for the best (and not without the advice of Mr Bird and Mr Cooper) tho' some things proved otherways they being for the safest way, tho more chargeable which cost much more money than I could have immagined, and I wish it had cost much less, that more might have been paid to Mr Hickon but as things all along happened unfortunately to me, it could not well be otherwise after you were pleased to give me loans to pay. Mr Bird (for which and all other kindnesses I return you ten thousand thanks) which I have wished very often I had not done, it being the same thinge to lie in Prison for £300 as £200, tho I have hitherto fended it off with

much a doo ; my most humble and hearty thankes first to you for it, and then to Bro' Henry and Arthur who weire so kind as to be bound with mee, to pay £10 per ann, till £100 be paide. I cannot as yett tell whither it will be [ ] or not till I hear from the [ ], if not I must come to it at last, which if I doe, I hope God will enable me to undergoe it with an humble resignation to his divine will and patiently waite till he shall be gratiously pleased to deliver mee.

" Sir I begg pardon I have not write to you before, but I expected to have sent you this account almost every post since I writ to you. Hon[d] Sir, I hope you will be pleased to pardon this with all my other faults and faliures and be pleased to except of my most humble hearty and sincere thanks and acknowledgements for all your favours and kindnesses from time to time conferred on me who is your most humble and dutiful Nephew to command

" whilst I am

" Benjamin Glegg."

Extract—Benjamin Glegg *to* Mr. Edisbury

" London,

" Honoured Sir, " *May 8th*, 1697.

" I am very much grieved to send the ill news of the unfortunate Death of my dear Nephew Ned Glegg who was drowned on thursday last about 3 a clock at Easham 15 miles off wheire he and his Coz Fowler went to see their Unkle Cotton ; the manner now as related by Sir Robert Cotton's family was that his Unkle Mr Thomas Cotton Mr Fowler another gentleman and himself went to the river (they having a bote but non to manage it but themselves) my nephew would wash himself tho they would have perswaded him from it, but could not, when he was in the water he said there

was a hole, which Mr Cotton desired him to take care of and come out, saith he never fear, I'le find the bottom of it : he went a few steps and fell in, they did all they could to save him but could not though he came up 3 or 4 times the gentleman who was with them (who could swime very well) was gone on the other side of the hedge, but hearing them cry help came and jumpt into the water but he never came up after he is to be buryd privately this night about 10 oclock at a chappell near Mr Cottons non of Sir Roberts family go to the buryall so I believe their is no to be their but Mr Thomas Cotton's family pray Sir give my love and servis to my sister and neece wishing they may take this misfortune as from him who as a great dispenser of all things and say with Job the Lord giveth and taketh away blessed be the name of the Lord on whose mercy and goodness we ought to rely, tho the fortune seems to be adverse to us but God who is the great Ruler of the world can change all things for our goods which if he may doe is the hearty prayer of your afflicted nephew to comand whilst I am

" Ben Glegg."

Hugh Delves *to* Joshua Edisbury

" *March* 23, 1699.

" Sir,

" I was at Dodington on Munday, and then Sir Thomas And my Lady where vary well, but the High Sherrife After his Long Jurney as he hath had in to Gloster-shaire, hee hath gott the gout, with toe and heele, and goes Limpeing up and downe the House on A sticke, but yesterday he was gotton to Audlem to Mr Olivers. I have been with him at Dodington but once since he came home ; A greate deal of talk I have had with him. His Lady, hee tells me was much con-

cerned as well as hee was, but very glad to see one Another. He tells me they have Agreede all he is to have £3500 paid him within 6 months or there About after marriage. I asked him what family hee had with him, none but J Walker. As for A joynture she left all to Mr Delves, which I will here macke be £500. [ ] he is to have more £1000 att the ould man's Death, which hee is vary old and blind of an eye, besides good Legacies of 5 or 600 left by sum Ant—Mr Walker has gone back into Glostershire on horsebacke, and he is to call on Sargeant Burch, which hee is to macke the writinges, and to sett a time to goe to Woster to meete theire Councell and Mr Delves sum where, I beleive at Ecklesall. I perceive by Mr D hee is not well satisfied, thinking he hath disobliged his famely. I was in the dineing rume. Mr Walker was talking sumthing to his Marster About going to [—helpe ?] Mr Sherife sayde hee would go with his men from Dodington. Sir Thomas made answer hee must not goe from Dodington, hee should goe from his owne house, which I did see by Mr Delves' countenance ill [——] him. I did not know what to say, but sayed god knows whether ever A Delves will ever goe from Dodington Sherrif Againe I perseeve here is A greate truble about this match. Mr Delves received a letter from you the contents of which I cannot remember, he perseves you are vary angry with him but one thing he observes in Itt, you have been his frend, And hopes you will bee his best friend, hee [hath] to his father still. This is all but my humble syrvices presented to yor Worship and Madam Glegg and Love to Cousin Ermin

" I remain Y^r faithfull Sarvant to
command

" Hugh Delves."

From Robert Moyle *to* Joshua Edisbury.

" Cambridge,
" *January* 27, 1692.

" Honoured Sir,

" I received this morning the newes of your being at London in good health, which was very welcome to me, and I pray heartily for a continuance thereof these rolling times, Revolutions wee call them; for if our health hold out wee may the better endure the diminutions of our wealth. Mr Woolley tells mee you were informed I was in Cheshire, but I have not been there since the last coming up hither. My kinsman Mr Hugh Delves writes mee word my friends at Dodington are in much sorrow and trouble for the losse of their Relations; I am very sorrie for the occasion of their trouble, and pray God in his good time to make them happie compensations of their love. Even thus also wee dye dayly, one friend or other no small part of ourselves dropping into the grave. I pray when you write to Dodington, give my humble service to Sir Thomas and my Lady, and to Mr Delves and his daughter, if there, and tell Sir Thomas I have passed this winter hitherto, I blesse God, prettie well, but I am now afflicted with paines in my limbs upon these sudden turns of weather wee have here, and I believe it is all of a piece thorow England. It makes me often think of Gundemar's character of our countrey of England, that it might serve, if a man knew in the morning, what cloaths would serve him till night, by reason of the sudden changes wee are subject unto of hot and cold and God knowes in your time and mine wee have had as changeable weather in the State. I pray God if it be his will, that we may once arrive at the stability of peace and truth. I have said much on Major Rose's matter and on his side here, and the Coll: is inclined to make the lease to

him when once they are satisfyed that he hath made a satisfactory agreement with Mr Craddock for the mony he owes him, which it seems is a considerable summe; Thus with my humble service to your Honoured selfe, Madam Gleg, and the Doctor your brother, I pray for your health and happiness, and remaine Sir, your very

" humble servant,

" Rob. Moyle."

Joshua Edisbury was not at all a satisfactory husband, but he was never an unkind one; and to judge by his letters, a devoted lover after ten years of married life.

" Dear Heart,

" Had not this opportunity offered itself I had on purpose sent a messenger to thee tomorrow to enquire after thy health and give thee an account of mine which I prayse God is very good and trust the same of thyn. Though I cannot possitively tell when I shall return yet I pray take it for granted that I will be longer absent than conveniency require and I may truly say I shall thinke this time longer than ordinary for thy sake. I was this day at Erthigg where I left friends well and they enquired after thee and other friends. I have not yet seen brother Owen and question if he come not hither whether I shall ever see him at all. I pray thank Sir Thomas and milady for their horses and hope I shall return them safe, though the grey mare cast a shoe before I got hither. God Almighty keep and preserve thee.

" Thy loving husband,

" Pentry yr Clawdd, " Josua Edisbury.

" *March the* 10*th*, 1668."

" Dear Heart,

" I got praysed be God, yesterday well to Erthig and found my father and the rest of his family there, who

enquired after you and friends in Cheshire and kindly remember them to you all. I have enclosed sent you Kate's letter which happily you can unriddle better than myself. Sister Mat is your humble servant and very much longs to see you and desires you to tender her best respects and acknowledgments to Sr Thomas and accept of the same to your selfe. I am sorry I cannot tell when I shall be backe for I am already weary of this solitary being alone. I pray present my service to Sir Thomas and lett him know I shall be sure to perform the best service I can in making enquiry after the concerns he spoke off and have returned him word by bearer. I could wish you here to hear the nightingall sing, if it were not to your disadvantage. My love (——) to all friends with you.

"I am your affectionate husband,

"Pentry 'r Clawdd, "Josua Edisbury.

"*April The 29th*, 1669."

The last clause is interesting, since popular tradition steadfastly affirms that the Nightingale never sings north of the Trent, yet here in 1669 one was singing at Pentre'-r-Clawdd. The Nightingale is still an occasional visitor in these parts and when his melodious warblings break the dim stillness of the green "Cathedral Aisle" the inhabitants of Wrexham throng to Erthig Wood. Nimrod, whose "Reminiscences" are frequently quoted in these volumes is facetious on the subject; some people he suggests stayed out too late, some altogether, in fact in the words of the now old fashioned song

Nightingales' songs indeed are rare,
And of such nightingales' songs beware.

Little indeed thought Grace Edisbury, when reading her

welcome letters in the sunny walled garden at Doddington Hall, that the time would come when she would return, broken hearted, to its shelter. Happy for her that by her brother's kindly hospitality, it was always open to her, for she was rarely with her husband, and there is no proof that she ever lived at Erthig. The House-keeper indeed sends messages to her "Dear Madam," and the faithful Steward goes down to meet the coach, but Mrs. Edisbury was then on her way to Doddington not Erthig. The greetings in the letters received by Edisbury are always to "Madam Glegg, Cosen Betty, little Miss, Your Brother the Doctor," and others, but there is not a single mention of his wife. Yet they remained friends, for she was with him in London very nearly at the end of his career, and her affectionate illegible letter, directed to "the Blew Spires Old Bayley," is the last which he received.

The outward semblance of Mr. Edisbury remains unknown; but the man himself is clearly revealed in every line of the innumerable documents he so carefully docketed and left behind. A jovial, easy going country gentleman, addicted unfortunately to speculation, chiefly in mines, and to gambling in the then national sport of cock-fighting. His hand was always in his pocket, but by no means only for himself. Open at hazard any one of his numerous private letters, and the chances are it contains thanks for past kindness, or perhaps also a request for further favours. He was in middle life when he succeeded to his father's estate, and had a large circle of relatives and acquaintances, most of whom appear to have been constantly in debt and difficulty. He himself

borrowed largely in every direction, "never paid interest on his mortgages or bonds," "but preferred after a few years to renew the obligation for capital and interest," not unfrequently borrowing further sums from the same person.

II

It was in 1682 that Joshua Edisbury, at that time one of the most popular men in the County, was elected High Sheriff. His ambitions had grown with his fortunes, and he decided to build for himself a habitation fitting for the important position he now held.

The site he chose was one that must for ever commend itself for an unrivalled situation. Here Wat's Dyke, running from north to south above the river valley, terminates in a wooded hill, scarped and scarred by well defined earthworks. On the eastern side, the level grasslands sweep smoothly into green lawns, on the west an abrupt artificial descent separates the elevated terrace from the undulating park slopes, and the horizon is bounded by a range of distant hills.

Somewhere about the same spot, long before Edisbury's time, had stood an old house, but every vestige of it was destroyed in the building of the present Hall.

"Erthig is a house which largely retains the character given to it when it was first built towards the close of the seventeenth century."* This was a Building Age, "when Wren and his pupils, having set their mark on the Metropolis in the churches and public buildings re-erected after the Great Fire, were then engaged all over the

* *Country Life*, November 1910.

country in constructing stately uncompromising stone and brick mansions in the place of picturesque, but often decayed, timbered houses of the Tudor period. The plan of Edisbury's house was that first introduced by Inigo Jones and adopted in innumerable houses throughout England and the Welsh border."

As demand inevitably creates supply, a feature of this Building Age was the development of a class of skilled craftsmen (free master masons) who, aspiring not to the title of Architects, were capable of carrying out a thoroughly good building scheme on their own initiative. Such an one was Thomas Webb of Middlewick, who in 1683 " covenanted and agreed to undertake and perform the care and oversight of the contriving building and finishing of a case or body of a new house for the said Joshua Edisbury att Erthig aforsaid."

THE CHARGE OF ERTHIGG HOUSE. 1684.

An account of ye Charge of A house 85 foot long and 50 foot deepe according to a draft delivered to Joshua Edisbury, Esq.

Hon^rd Sir,

The Brickworke will be 2326 yds w^ch at 6 per yard is	58 03 00
The straight Arches over y^e windows will be 58 w^ch at 1.81 pr Arch will cost	4 16 00
The Lime used about 5 tones and Brickworke will be	24 10 00
The Stone work will cost	98 00 00
The Glazeing will be 1778 foot at 4½ p. foot cost	33 06 09
The Carpenters and Joiners Worke about Care of ye house cost	205 00 00
The Iron Worke and Nailes will cost	64 00 00
The Lead and Workmanship of it will cost	110 00 00
The Slates and Slateing will cost	43 15 00
The Flagging and Laying ye Soughs and Harthes	27 00 00
The Clearing ye Foundations and Scaffold Cords will cost	10 00 00
	677 10 9

The plastering I have here omitted because some of y^e Rooms may be

ERTHIG HALL. FRONT VIEW
From an old copper-plate engraving
(See Note in List of Illustrations)

wainscotted and other inferior Rooms not plastered at all. The Master is to bring to the place all manner of Bricke and Stone and Sand for y^e^ carrying on of y^e^ Worke.

On March 17 1685 a contract was signed between Joshua Edisbury and Philip Rogers of Eyton (also described as of Erbistock) a local man, with respect to the woodwork of the interior of the new mansion, and later of the erecting of two garden buildings, summer or banqueting houses, one to be at the East end and one on the South side of the Long walk. But he (Rogers) dallied so much that the whole house was retarded to the damage and disappointment of Joshua Edisbury, who took out two warrants against him for breach of contract.

CONTRACT.

It is agreed between Joshua Edisbury of Erthigg Esq. and Philip Rogers Carpenter of Eyton, y^t^ ye s^d^ Philip is to doe ye Carpenters Worke for two banquetting houses to be erected at Erthigg, that is to say he is to fall square raise and finish as agreed onely two out dores to be omitted Ye s^d^ Joshua Edisbury is to find all boards sand and timber to be made loadable by ye s^d^ Philip and ye worke to be sufficiently performed at ye sight of Thomas Webb of Middlewich and ye s^d^ Philip shall begin ye worke on ye 8th day of May next ensueing and soe to continue till it be finish'd that ye s^d^ Joshua Edisbury suffer no damage by any neglect in ye work, in consideration whereof ye s^d^ Philip is to receive twenty pounds proportionally as ye worke goes forward to which contract ye persons above named have set their hands.

JOSHUA EDISBURY.
PHILIP ROGERS.

Witnesses FRANCIS EDISBURY
THOMAS BILLET.

The estimated cost of the buildings appears ridiculously small from the modern standpoint, especially as it included the stones, bricks, and timber as well as haulage. The master mason received of it for his own guerdon fifty pound in lawful English money, with meals, drink and

lodging for himself and his horse as often as he should come and stay about the said work.

Another agreement made about four months later with the three master craftsmen who were to assist Webb enters into further details.

Dated respectively February 27 and July 7, 1692, are letters from one Burtch of Nantwich, employed in painting the panelled rooms. Another from Ridgeway, Edisbury's house steward, gives further particulars of work done about the house and grounds, the workmen concerned being perhaps then, as now, part of the regular staff constantly employed on the estate.

There must be kept in mind, however, in commenting on the moderate cost of the building of Erthig, not only the cheapness of labour and the greater value of money at the time, but the fact that the Edisbury house was not, as at present, a stately mansion with a frontage 200 feet long, said to have as many windows as days of the year, but only the square central block of the present building, with covered ways on either flank leading to stables and offices.

" Namptwich,
" *February the 27th*, 1692.

" I understand by John Griffyths his letter that you are willing to pay me ffor the Deale Roome, but not for the other two. Mr. Webb likes the collours of them very well, but will not medle with the setting a price of em ; 'tis now three quarters of a year since the work was done, and Oiles and Collours are dear and must be paid for, soe that I humbly desire your Worship will be pleased to send down orders that I may have money for my Worke. I have earnest occasion for it, else should

not give your Worship this Trouble soe desiring your Worship will be pleased to let me hear from you, who remains your Worship's most humble and obedient Servant, "WHITE CRISP BURTCH."

"Earthig,
"*July* 9, 1692.

"MUCH HONOURED SUR,

"I received yours yesterday which I was very glad off. I heard last wensday by your letter to Mrs. Lea conserning the parlor floor, I wanted your orders for sume Timber to line the jousts. This may certifie your Worship that the garrett is finished to the hanging the doors and shutters, which shall be done as soon as I have the hinges onely I desire to know wheather you will pleas to have the same door to serve or wheather I shall make one of oak shutable to the roome if the same door serve it should be painted: as you pleas to order it. I am at present about shutters to the parlor doors that goes to the garding; I have made ready the Best of the Boards for the floor, as well as I can, and have order'd the sawyers to come to saw what I want for to line the joyce, and I intend to set about the floor nexte week and shal lay the ould Boards first and make the rest as dry as I can in the meane while. I was with Madame Billett soone after your Worship went to London and I found that the cabbinet which I had begun was not shutable to her desier. which was to be just like one which her Sister hath, which I was not well Able to performe, tho' indeed shee would have had mine, but finding shee did more incline to the other sort, I left it to her freedom, and was contented to release her from mine,

"Conserning the rooms, the drab roome I think is painted very well the pannells are resembling Yew, the [ ] to prince wood, and the moulding a light color. The Doctor's Chamber is prety well don sumewhat like

Ash, I think; and grained much like the Hall. The other roome is but ordinary, I think, and plane, ether a dark brown or sumewhat like sinnimone culor.

"I have acquainted Edward in particulor what you writt, and I have the following Account to Returne your Worship. There is no stones in a maner carried for the oxe-house and swine-yard. The horses have been out of order and but weak; he saith he will gett them cured as fast as he can, not to neglect harvest. He also tells me he will observe your order about the Stable Court he hopes to have it dune the beginning of the week.

"The Coale-rick is about 4 foot 6 inches high and 2 foot 9 inches wide, besides the [ ] at the side, and 25 foot in length, they cost £03.19.00, ther will be more home quickly: ther was no Hay cutt down till last Thursday. the weather hath inclin'd as if it would Rain, but yet houlds up very good weather. Edward thinks if it pleas you that the field next the lane, the 6 acre [ ] when the Hay is made to stack it in the field by Reason and the other fields joining to it may be fitt for winter grass; The ground at Bryn Rowen,* he tells me, is in good order, and the fields you writt about he will take care of ther is good grass and he thinks they may mow well.

"I sent for the sawyer last night, and he saith the trees at Plastirion appears very good, he hath saw'd between 3 and 4 Roods, and there is 2 or 3 more to saw. He hath sawn all to three quarters wheather you will pleas to have any of the remainder to any other size, if it be as good as he speakes of I know not, but that it might wainscutt the long gallery, if your Worship like the wood . . . If you think well of that I will go and see it. "RIDGWAY."

* Bryn yr Owen.

Charles II was on the throne when Edisbury received the first of the three following letters, the last one of which announces his death. No royal portrait (except that of Harry of the many wives) is so familiar as the long yellow saturnine countenance of the " Merry Monarch," whose character is so aptly summed up in his mock epitaph

Here lies our Sov'reign Lord the King
Whose word no man relies on,
Who never said a foolish thing
And never did a wise one.

To the American reader the name Yale already occurring in these pages must strike with a familiar sound. Dr. David Yale, Chancellor of Chester, at one time purchaser of the Erthig estate, continued his possession of Old Plâs Grono, now represented by Plâs Grono farm. His descendants, and among them the redoubtable Elihu, governor of Madras and founder of Yale College, lived at New Plâs Grono within the precincts of Erthig park. As late as 1876 the old house was still standing, but now there remains only the walled kitchen garden, its herbaceous borders gay with summer and autumn flowers. The memory of Yale has been eclipsed on his own soil by that of Thomas Apperley, known to literary fame as " Nimrod," who succeeded him at New Plâs Grono, and the old forest tree which stands in front of the modern farm buildings is popularly known as " Nimrod's Oak." Elihu's career was a chequered one; drafted off abroad like many another ambitious youth on attaining his majority, he set sail for the East.

More fortunate than most, he rapidly rose in fortune and position and became Governor of Madras. He had many enemies; and Rumour, loud tongued, and not altogether without cause, hinted at scandals in his private life. At last, having in a passion hanged his groom, he was forced to resign and return to England; but it was during his residence in Madras that the letter was written which runs as follows :—

" Fort St. George,
" *the* 2 *April*, 1682.

" Worthy Sir,

" I was much Surpriz'd by a letter from your Worthy Brother the Doctor and more with its Generous Contents, telling me of a present of four Rundletts of Sandpatch Ale, an honour I could no ways expect, nor hope, knowing of no obligation to such, or a lesser favour from you, and can be imputed to nothing but my good fortune and your boundless liberality. 'Twas no less fame to your noble Elixar too, that past two extractions of the torrid Zone, Stoutly preserving its Spiritts, without [losing] the least Tincture of its Native Complection, And certainly you have outarted the Virtuoso's Notion of Transfution, this being the only prackticall Hypothesis, to create and renew our English bloods, and outdoes the other as farr as the distance of the Experiment, and I am sure had a much contrary effect, Transcending the Canaryan Nectar, But I well remember fair words and praises are no price Currant for Ale—'Tis a precious Comodity that requires present Sattisfaction which the trewth is I cannot now so well discharge as I desire, therefore begg your and your good Ladyes acceptance of part in one of the vessells fild with our best Mango Atchar to yourself, and to her a Japan Skreene which come upon this Shipp—*Bengall Merchant*, recomended to your good Brother for Conveyance to you. I should gladly

have heard from you, and received your comands, which at all tymes shall be wellcom'd and obeyed to the power of

"Worthy Sir

"Your most obliged obedient Servant

"ELIHU YALE.

"The humblest of my service to your excellent Lady and family.

"*Aprill the* 21. Since the foregoing 'tis my misfortune not to prevail with the Captain for to carry the Skreene, his shipp being full, so pray excuse me till next yeare.—Yours, E. Y."

Having returned therefore from the East with much wealth but a somewhat tarnished reputation, Elihu Yale, established in his late father's country residence, became an energetic vestry-man, a benefactor to the Church, and High Sheriff of the county of Denbigh; he was one of the Creditors of Joshua Edisbury; and if it is true that he exacted a bond of £4000 in return for his loan of £2000, it is evident that with him old friendship did not stand in the way of business.

The latter years of Elihu Yale were spent in his town house in Great Ormond Street, Queen Square, and it was there that in 1718 Cotton Mather wrote to implore his assistance for the struggling collegiate school at Saybrook, Connecticut, afterwards removed to Newhaven, suggesting at the same time that the college should in future bear the name of its benefactor.

This appeal did not fall on deaf ears, and Elihu Yale in one year alone contributed the then considerable sum of £800 in money and goods: He had certainly intended that the college should benefit at his demise, but he died

suddenly, leaving his will incomplete and unsigned, and having suffered the loss of £40,000.

Elihu Yale was buried in Wrexham, and the following inscription adorned his grave :

Born in America, in Europe bred,
In Afric travell'd and in Asia wed,
Where long he liv'd and thriv'd ; at London dead
Much good, some ill he did, so hope all's even,
And that his soul thro' mercy's gone to heaven.
You that survive, and read,—take care
For this most certain exit to prepare ;
For only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

The value of this letter as an autograph is considerable, but to the present owner its chief interest lies in the fact that a very beautiful old " Japan Skreene " still stands in the State bedroom at Erthig Hall. It is older therefore than the house, and must have been brought there by Joshua from Pentre'-r-Clawdd.

Thomas Yale, a younger brother of Elihu, also made money in the East, and not always, it would appear, in strictly honourable ways.

His letter is amusing from its quaint style, but the meaning of the subject, some burning question of local politics, has long since been lost in obscurity.

" Worthy Sir,

" My Intentions weare to have made you a Visitt long Since, but have been soe afflicted with my rumatisme that dare not yet encounter a welsh Journey. Pray

THE STATE BEDCHAMBER WITH THE "YALE SKREENE"

Sir when you see Mr. Gomersall let him not pretend to see you, for most of our Brittish members of the good Doctor's perswation have given their affidavitts that he's blinde, lame &c. or else it would have bene difficult to have procured the Pention which Sure will make him live more easy.

"And that you may See what Champions you and the rest of us have and that our Brittish cowredge is not quite lost I have enclosed sent you Sir William Williams' discourse to the Lords of the Treasury which may be the first sent to the cuntrey for it is certeine some of the first Rank in Towne was pleased to complyment us with the Title of an honest Stout People which is what oft errs from your faithfull

"Humble Servant

"*January* 21, [16]96. THOMAS YALE."

While Joshua in the wilds of Denbighshire was administering elementary justice to poachers and vagabonds, his brother was following with distinction a legal career in town, becoming in due course Master in Chancery and Chancellor to the Bishop of Exeter. He also sat in Parliament as Member for Oxford University. The letter written by him to his brother on February 7, 1685, describing the last hours of Charles II, has the interest of being a description given by one who, if not actually an eye-witness of the scene, was at least so near the spot as to have received first-hand intelligence at the earliest possible moment.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"Upon friday a quarter before 12 the King resign'd his soul to Almighty God. A little before he dyed the room was cleard only the Duke, the E. of Bath

and another Lord. What was said I cannot hear, only the King gave him (the Duke) his briches and told him there were papers that concerned him in his pocket, and gave him the key of his closet. Some while before he mention'd his 2 sons that were unprovided for. I cannot hear that he mentioned the D. of Monmouth in all his sicknes to the Duke or any that waited upon him.

"The King alter'd about 2, on Thursday and since that time there was little hopes, blessed be god he kept his understanding all the while till 3 hours before death and most of those 3 hours at intervals. The Queen is in greate perplexity and all her servants. A little before the K'gs death, the Queen sent to ask him pardon for all her faults. The K. said he knew only his own for which he asked her pardon.

"All thinges, god be prais'd in a great calm, the Duke proclaimd about 4 o'clock, there first went a troop of grenadiers then all the Heralds, and the principall gave my Lord Mayor the reason of this attendance, then was read the enclosed proclamation subscribed by the councell and lords, after the Heralds came the Queens coach, then the Arch Bishops and Lord Keepers, Presidents, Privy seals and Dukes, Earls, etc. But I have much mistaken, for after the troop of the grenadiers came a full troop of the guards about 200, then before the Heralds came the messengers and soe on, as I said before. After the Kings decease the Duke came to the councell and spoke to them after this sort. 'My Lords, Now the Crown is descended upon mee I do declare I will never alter the Government as it is now established in Church and State and I will sacrifice the last drop of my blood to maintain the protestant religion and as far as in me lies I will follow my late brother's example.'

"I hear this is to be at length in a declaration which my Lord Keeper and Privy seal are to draw this up for

the presse. I have enclosed you two proclamations and I will send you the other as soon as I can get it. The Frocks are sent by Harrison. I have nothing now as I remember.

" I am your truly loving brother,

" JOHN EDISBURY.

" I forget to tell you the King expressed a great deal of kindness towards the Duke.

" *February* 7, 1685."

It is a remarkable fact that three distinguished Welshmen who held office as Speaker in the House of Commons should have contributed their Autographs to the " Family Letter Book."

Earliest in date is Sir William Williams who was unanimously elected at the fourth parliament of Charles II ; that General election, at which the terms Whig and Tory first came into use. He was in office when Jeffreys and Peyton were expelled the House, receiving sentence kneeling at the Bar. So severely did he upbraid them that Peyton next day sent him a challenge. Williams retorted by an Act making duelling an unpardonable crime, and consigning his antagonist to the Tower. Another version of the story says that Peyton withdrew the challenge for fear of reprisals from the young gentlemen of Gray's Inn.

" *Sept. 8th*, 1690.

" DEARE SR,

" Your repeated favours to me should discourage me from requesting any further kindness from you till I had made suteable returnes for the former, but being

so unfortunate as to meet no oppertunity, I can only at present acknowledge them and desire you'll retaine so good an opinion of me as to when I will readily manifest my respects and service to you on all occasions. Sir John Wynn and others of my neighbours having promised me the favour of appearing on the Grand Jury I become your humble petioner to doe the like tho' very seldom you oblige any on this account yet I hope so good company will induce you and your compliance herin will be extreame kindly [ ] by

" Sir, your humble servant,

" William Williams."

Sir John Trevor (a minion of the notorious Jeffreys) whose ill favoured cross-eyed countenance scowls from his picture in the Speakers' portrait gallery at Westminster, was, in the middle of the seventeenth century, first Commissioner in the Court of Chancery and Speaker in the House of Commons. Macaulay says of him " he wanted neither parts nor learning, but his integrity was with good reason suspected; the Tory party to which he belonged no longer looked up to him; his greediness, impudence, and venality were so notorious that all honourable gentlemen whatever their political opinions were ashamed to see him in the chair. In 1695 a committee was appointed to examine the books of the City of London and the East India Company. Foley was placed in the chair of the Committee, and within a week it was reported that in the preceding season John Trevor received 1000 guineas for expediting a local bill. This discovery gave great satisfaction to the Whigs, who always hated Trevor; even gentle Archbishop Tillotson called him knave. When the report of the Committee

was read it was proved that he had been guilty of high crime and misdemeanour, and he was compelled to pronounce his own sentence from the Chair."

Hard it is that a man should be judged by the outward view, seeing that he himself had no hand in the making. Yet in John Trevor the crooked mind was in accordance with the crooked sight. Many are the anecdotes concerning this glaring defect. "That is a kinsman of mine, whom I have allowed to sit here to learn the knavish part of the law," said Arthur Trevor, when questioned as to his odd-looking clerk. Being addicted to high play, he became the recognized arbiter on all gambling disputes. "Justice is blind, but Bribery only squints," said the Wits; and when he was expelled from the House "he could no longer take an oblique view of every question from the chair." Great must have been the excitement at Doddington when Elizabeth Delves received the following letter giving a private account of that memorable scene. Trevor became eventually a principal mortgagee on the Erthig estate, and his interview with the steward is told later. Mr. Peter Shakerley, who signs himself "cousin" to Edisbury, was Member for Chester in the twelfth year of William III.

"*March* 12, 1694.

"Sir,

"This daye has beene taken up with a debate concerning our Speakers takeing 1000 guinies, which weare presented to him, after the passing the Orphan's Bill, which Ended about half an houre after 8 by a vote as I remember to this Effect, That the Speaker of this

house, by takeing a gratuitie of 1000 guinies after the passing of that Bill is guiltie of a high Crime and misdemeanor.

"Yours truely,
"ROBERT COTTON.

"For Joshua Edisbury Esquire
"att Erthygg by Wrexham bagg free 'Sir Robert Cotton.'"

"DEAR COSEN BETY,

"All hear are your servants. Sir John Winn lookt very paile at the days work, my blessing to dear bety. The house sat soe long that som of the members fainted away and Mr. Shackerley run for a surgeon: Sir Robert staid to the last as weak as he is, and much frightened was I least he had not been able to hold it on.

"Your loving Cozen,
"JOSHUA EDISBURY.

"My Mother and Lady Craven and all hear are much yours. My love to Mrs. Lea her daughters are both well and very good."

"Westminster,
"*January* 5, 1694.

"SIR,

"You may think me verry forgettfull both of my respects and promis to you that I have not before this time given you the trouble of a Letter, but truly I have these two things to say for myself, first, that I have not had anything to write save what you had in the Publicke Prints (for though the loss of our good Queen was much feared before it came yet it was not fitt to mention it before the Government thought fitt to publish it) and in the next Place I had no mind to write any News which I was not well assured was true.

"The Death of the French King's great Generall

Mounsieur Luxemburg is certain ; But as for the Report about his Son's killing the Duke of Mayn (the French King's base son) it seems but a fiction. We are still in expectation of some attack to be made by the Confedderate Forces towards Dixmude, and if the Frost houldes 'tis affirmed something will be don on that side and the Duke of Savoy, it is thought will force Cazall to surrender to us if not verry speedily relieved by the French.

" Yesterday our House was in a grand Committee to considder of Ways and Means to rais the Remainder of the supply for next year the totall of which is 5 millions, and 2 millions of it is supposed to come in upon the 4d in the pound Bill now before us, one million more is designed to be had out of the Tunnage and Poundage that allready passed, and towards a Fund for the other two million a Duty was proposed of 3d per tunn upon *all* Coal, But upon the arguments urged that *all* Coal could not bear that nor indeed any charge, the Question dwindled to onely Coal putt on Shippboard and landed in England or Wales or Ireland, but that also cooled on the Debate and other Hares were started ; one was a Duty to be paid on Marriages, Christenings and Burialls and other hints were again made for a Tax upon Leather which is what the Courtyers doe most desire ; it would raise an unknown great summ of money and create a great number of Officers, which would make soe many dependancys upon them. But that which yett seems the most æquall (if any Tax can be soe) is a proposition made by Dr. Barebone, viz : that each house having two Chimneys and under four should pay 2s 6d per Ann., and each house having four or more should pay 5s per Ann. ; this, he proposes, will raise one hundred and twenty thousand pounds per Ann. which it is allowed wd be a fund for two millions. But what these debates will end in time must shew.

"My humble service presented to yourself, cozen Betty, and Mrs. Lea.

"I remain

"Yr oblidged Nephew and most obedient servant,

"PETER SHAKERLEY.

"To-morrow every person of Note in this town will be in mourning for the Queen, which has made Black Cloath rise from 18 to 30d pr yard."

"Gwersett,

"*July 3rd*, 1694.

"SIR,

"I heard not till last night that yu were come down from London, els had wayted on yu yesterday and waved going to the mountaine where I found but one Brood of Grows and those very little ones, and few in number being but 3 young ones, one of which I shott and another the dogg caught, wee trodd up severall ould Cocks which makes mee think the Hens are yet sitting. I must return home on satturday next. If either to-morrow, Thursday or Fryday yu intend to goe to the Mountain pleas pr Bearer to send mee notice of your hour and place wher I may meet yu and Ill wayte upon you, or if you goe not to the mountain please to let mee know pr bearer what day you will be at Erthigg and Ill wayte on you there.

"My humble service presented to yorself and Cos Betty.

"I remain,

"Your affectionate and obliged Nephew and Servant,

"PETER SHAKERLEY.

"The Grigg on the mountain has been much burnd this year."

Little thought Mr. Shakerley when writing to his Uncle Edisbury that any future reader would evolve from his brief comments a whole series of historical scenes. Small-pox was indeed the most terrible of the ministers of death; it condemned its survivors to life-long disfigurement worse than death, and spared neither the Queen on her throne, nor the beggar at her gate. When stricken by this awful malady, "the good Queen" set in order her private affairs, commanded all hitherto immune persons to leave the palace, and prepared calmly for the end. Her agonized husband watching by her bedside fell into a prolonged series of fits, and her dying words failed to reach him.

While Bishop Tenison was praying by the bedside of Mary, Bourdaloue was administering Extreme Unction to Monsieur Luxembourg, "the French king's great general" who had so often led his armies to victory. "How glad the Prince of Orange will be," said Louis, "to hear of our loss." He was mistaken; "that news found William unable to think on any loss but his own."

Villeroy, who succeeded to the command of the troops in the Netherlands, owed his elevation to the personal favour of the King. Handsome, accomplished, eminently a courtier, he possessed every social advantage, and to him was confided the person of "the French king's base son," the Duke of Maine. But the latter when sent to the front and entrusted with an important command wept and called for his confessor, though his officers implored him to make the advance. The town of Dixmude fell by treachery into the hands of the French. But the event

of the year 1695 was the raising (by William) of the siege of the strong city of Namur.

This being the first introduction of Sir John Trevor, who was a neighbour and acquaintance, if not an intimate friend, of Edisbury, the following letter, though written many years sooner than the crisis which has just been described, cannot conveniently find an earlier place in the narrative.

"Temple,
"*February* 11, 1681.

"Deare Sir,

"I have yours of the 8th and I hope ere this that you have an acknowledgement of the Receipt of your two former. I have your watch and have paid Mr. Knibs but I think him very Deare. I shall bring it downe with mee if you doe not command otherwise.

"Ned Kynaston hath not his health in this Towne, and therefore hee leaves me here five days before our appoineted day for parting hence; for he goes in the Salop Coach on Tuesday next, and I shall not follow till Monday. But I will give you an account of my March the next weeke and I hope that matters may soe fall out that I may bee happy on seeing you on the Road. I understand that our Assizes begin at Chester on the 3rd of Aprill and thence to Holywell and Denbigh. Some people (and such as are very wise and discreete) seeme satisfyed that they shall see a Parliament shortly, but for my part I see not any tendency to it, nor have I observed any points made that way since March last.

"Sir, there is no man hath a greater esteeme and honour for you than myselfe, and I shall allwayes bee most diligent to preserve myselfe in the Friendship you are pleased to have for mee and to retorn you all instances

of true affection and Friendship for I am with all reality of heart,

" Sir, your most faithfull Servant,

" J. TREVOR.

" Sir, I beseech you to Caution your Deputy not to act anything suddenly or unkindly toward your Predecessor who perhaps may be persecuted maliciously by Myddelton for his respect to mee.

" Note. I have att last an answeare to my Bill from Sir Thomas Myddleton wherein his Councell that drew itt hath been very bould with him. One of the Charges is that his Grandfather inclosed that his father promised to throw them open and that hee himselfe upon a Reference between us both to your Father and Sir John Wynne did promise to lay them open, etc. Now hee answears, that hee doeth not know that his Grandfather did Inclose, which is Downright Perjury—unless helped by a mentall Reservation to witt that he doeth not know that his Grandfather did digg and hedge himselfe or else by a strict interpretation, meaning that he doeth not know itt of his owne knowledge.

" Cann you imagine that Sir Thomas within two days of the Death of his only Sonn could think of inconveniencing mee, by sending to demand from my Wife two feilds in my possession, as tenant at will, and which lye convenient to mee. Hee was answered that Ladyday was not come."

Members of the Hanmer family, some of whom still live in the Erthig neighbourhood, may read with interest and perhaps offer some explanation concerning the affair of Mr. Edward Hanmer and his mother-in-law; for the present no solution can be offered.

" Wrexham,
" 9 *Jan.* 1698.

" Hon. Sir,

" Last friday I gave Mr. John Griffiths a London letter for you and Inclosed you'le receive one as came last post.

" My mother in law was prayed for in Church yesterday being Mr. Parker of Westertons daughter perhaps her friends in Cheshire know nothing of her illness yet I believe she will recover her distempir not being mortall but very seldom, it being wind chollick.

" You were pleased to tell me and Mr. John Lloyd att Erthig that you would discourse Mr. Bayly her brother in law about a settlement I will refer it to your worship if you please to take the trouble upon you I acquainted you then how the matter was so I need not trouble you with reiterating it, only this that I suppose Mr. Bayly or at leastwise my mother in law should not know that anything is proposed by me, least it should come to my father in law's ears and then nothing will be done and likewise if anyone should mention his wrieting to have them perused he is of such a jealous temper that he would judge there was some ill designs, he being not to be dealt with as other men, therefore I conceive if anything may be done his wife must be wrought by her friends to a complyance first and then she can prevayle with him to anything that is for her interest, which a certainty she may receive by an Agrement will be to her. Formerly she was hott for a Jointure but my wife would not unless her husband would allow us as much in present possession but now if they will not allow us anything for the present we are willing to make her a jointure and will give on security that she shall receive it if I and my wife should dye before her but we desire that in consideration the estate may be secured for my child. There's no other dange

now but that he might have issue male by another wife; but he's 5 or 6 years older than his wife so that she may outlive him and therefore a certainty would be for her interest. If you judge it requisite I will meet Mr. Bayly to discourse the business, but I beg of you not to discover that I've writ unless you judge it necessary I should not have had the boldness to trouble you in this affayre had you not been pleas'd to say you would discourse Mr. Bayly I humbly beg your pardon for this presumption and return you most humble thanks for all your favours which shall be acknowledged

"honor'd Sir,

"Your most obliged and humble Servant,

"EDWARD HANMER."

The writer of the next evidently thought it expedient not to sign his name to a missive which would prove compromising should it fall into the enemy's hands.

"*For* SIR ROBERT COTTON

"*June 15th*, 1699.

"HONORED SIR,

"I doubt not but e'er this you have received an account how Sir John Wynn, Sir Richard Myddelton and Mr. Brereton with many other gentlemen brought lately many hundreds of the meaner sort of people from theire neighbourhood to be made Burgesses of Denbigh. Some of your friends and well-wishers and myself, tho' we had but a few hours' notice, made all the haste we cold to Town to observe their motion and to preserve the Town's Liberty and Interest by all Lawful means possible. At first we cold not fathom their Design; but hoped they intended to obey the Mandamus, and fill the vacancyes of the 25 Capitall Burgesses, but by the sequel it appeared that making of new Burgesses was their whole Designe, and contriveing the best excuse they

could for delaying the others. Wherein they were senceable that had they proceeded they had met with an event disagreable to theire wishes, haveing not one part of six of the Towne for them. I hear they pretend in theire Afidavitt that they durst not proceed in their worke to fill the vacancies of the 25 Capitall Burgesses by reason they feared the Townes people, than which nothing can be more manifestly fals, for in truth they made new Burgesses in Despight to all Intreaty or Opposition, and refused to proceed to fill the vacancies, tho often earnestly Intreated to doe itt, by all which it seems plainly itt was in their power to entertaine either Courage or fear, According as was most agreable to their humour and Interests, when we first came to Towne the people flocked in makeing a lamentable complaint that they were takeing away their Liberty; and that the new Burgesses they were about to make, would take the bread out of their mouths, and Desired they might venture their lives in Defence of their Lyberty. But we alway dissuaded them from using any violence, and with such success that very few transgressed excepting some few Persons and Woemen and Children, whose passion were so great upon so sudaine a surprize and invasion of their Liberty, that noething we sayd prevailed with them, yett it proved to their own sorrow, for the Strangers being abundantly too strong for them they soon drove them off with wounds and in the pursuit, broake houses and glass windows and therein did abuse many Persons that gave them not the least offence or abuse, purely to gratifie their Humour and passion there being not the least Collour that they needed to do it for self preservation. And what leaves the new Burgesses and Invaders of the Towne's liberty more inexcusable, as I take itt, is, because they had Sir John Wynn, Mr. Roger Mostyn, Mr. Ellis Lloyd and Mr. Peter Ellis, being four justices of the peace in the towne with them together

with the Alderman and Bailiffes of the Towne, and though they had persons and strength enough att their command as well as authority effectually to suppress these riotous proceedings, yett they did not at all endeavour itt, for which reason many of us endured many affronts and Injuries, yett I hope when the matter comes to be Canvassed in a Court of Judicature Itt will be their turn to Suffer, who in Contempt of Law, neglected their duty, and may therefore be judged to be the occasion of all the wrong and mischief that was done. I suppose you have had a more particular relation of the business from others, therefore I forbear giving you any further trouble,

" And remain, Honoured Sir,
" Your ever faithfull and most humble servant "

At the end of the seventeenth century the representative of the first and now extinct peerage of Macclesfield was Charles Gerard, a cavalier who had fought for Charles I and shared the exile of Charles II. He was one of that motley assemblage who thronged to the Hague to recommend themselves to the Prince of Orange, and at the head of two hundred English gentlemen, dressed in armour and riding Flemish horses, was a conspicuous feature in the Royal progress through Exeter. Each of these gentlemen was accompanied by a negro servant brought from the sugar plantation of Guiana, a spectacle which amazed and delighted the citizens. Lord Macclesfield, and Lord Wharton a Puritan who had fought for the Long Parliament, were the most vehement opposers of the Abjuration bill. This bill, brought in by the Whigs, decreed that no person should sit in either House of Parliament or hold any office, military

or judicial, without making a declaration that he would stand by William and Mary against James and his descendants. Every male in the kingdom above sixteen was to make the same declaration before a certain day : if he failed to do so he was to pay double taxes and be incapable of exercising the electoral franchise. Marlborough, who supported the bill, wondered it should be opposed by Macclesfield, who had borne so prominent a part in the Revolution. Macclesfield, irritated by the charge of inconsistency, retorted with severity. " The noble Earl," he says, " exaggerates the share I had in the deliverance of our Country, I was ready indeed and shall always be ready to venture my life in defence of her liberties. But there are lengths to which even for the sake of her laws and liberties, I could never go . . . I only rebelled against a bad king : there were those who did much more."

An official letter with instructions addressed to Colonel Cotton July 22, 1699 :

" Sir,

" Since it is that you desire that there be no general muster this year, I am willing to comply with it. Yett I do think necessary that you should take effectual care to have your Militia settled as soon as possible and therefore to that end have sent you enclosed directions for private Musters and levying the Trophy money which desire youll forthwith communicate tc the Deputy Lieutenants there.

" I am, Sir

" Your most humble servant

" Macclesfield.

" I have postscript enclosed sent you some instructions for your directions in order to settle your Militia so as to make them usefull and considering that in all my time the Countrey have been at no expense with the contributions and maintenance, will more cheerfully comply with your orders, and—especially since for the Honour safety and Defence of their Countrey if you think to add anything to them or to object against any part therefore be pleasd to let me hear from you with what speed you can.

" *Instructions to the Deputy Lieutenant of Denbighshire*

" The Trophy money to be applied for buying Halberts, and considering the Continual charge the maintainers will be att from time to time in repayring of the old Armes, and the fine that they must of necessity impose upon them for their default, it saves a great deale of expense and trouble therefore to tell them at this Meeting, that they need not go to the expense of repayring the old Armes there being all necessity to buy new ones. As to the cloathing of the men with your own manufactures. I am loath to hint it to you tho' it is done in Lancashire. You ought also to imploy in Horse as many disbanded Troopers as you can procure ; a good trooper that has been in the service will make a good Corporale and a Corporale a good Quarter Master and I doe not so much value the Gentry sending fine Horses, a good squat horse of 9 or 10£ price will do as well to fill the service [ ] young fellows that are tenants or tenants sons and the Gentlemen will soon find the conveniency of. . . ."

Many interesting people were numbered among the correspondents of Joshua Edisbury, whose letters, if not particularly interesting themselves, serve as their writers'

introduction to the Erthig stage. Such an one is Sir John Wynn, one of the earliest improvers of Welsh gardens, and the introducer of a small swan egg pear, which bears his name. Philip Yorke, fourth in succession of the Erthig Squires, gives the following anecdote in his "Royal Tribes of Wales." Sir John Wynn, a man of pleasure in his youth, had long quitted his London haunts and rarely came to town; but early in the reign of Queen Anne paid a visit to Court. A former schoolfellow was among the first to greet him, a sober cleric, the Bishop of St. Asaph. "Ah, Sir John," said the good Bishop, "when I knew you first the devil was very great with you." "Yes, by Gad," replied Sir John, "and I wish he was half as great with me now." Sir John was a voluminous correspondent, and usually an exceedingly dull one. Most of his letters concern the affairs of the Delves family, and therefore find their place in the Delves collection. Here however is one short note:

"Wats Stay,
"*August* 10, 1699.

"I send you one or two of such frutes for your approbation as are to be ripe about this time. There are but four on that tree that bears the one bell like pear which is full ripe and the two very little peares are likewise ripe and the tree had but 9 out this year. The small long pear ought to be very yellow when ripe so I fear you will not be able to judge of its being an excellent one but not come to perfection the two sorts of apples are the best kinds I have the biggest is not yet ripe called the apple of Paradise. Pardon my presumption.

"I am your affectionate and humble servant
"JOHN WYNN."

Among the many friends and neighbours indebted to Edisbury for pecuniary assistance was Sir Robert Cotton of Combermere Abbey, Cheshire, and here, as in many other instances, the picturesque narrative of Macaulay furnishes a key to the private letters. Henry Booth, Lord Delamere, had been M.P. for Cheshire at the time that the notorious Jeffreys was Chief Justice for that County, and had complained to the Commons that the dearest interests of his constituents were entrusted to "a drunken Jack Pudding." When, later on, Delamere was brought before the House of Lords, accused of complicity in Monmouth's rebellion, every advantage which the letter of the law gave to the Government was used against him without scruple or shame. But the evidence of the chief witness, Saxton, who had himself been engaged in the rebellion, proved so undeniably false that Delamere and his friends were acquitted. "The King, who was present and unable to complain of a decision evidently just, went into a rage with Saxton and vowed that the wretch should be first pilloried before Westminster Hall for perjury, and then sent down to the West to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, for treason."

"*Jan.* 14, 1686.

"Dear Sir,

"This daye the Lord Delamer was tryed, there Majesties being present, The tryall lasted 6 or 7 howers, many witnesses weare examined against him, as well as for him, but in the End he was acquitted by all his Peeres. Saxons evedence was equally full against the same Lord; Mr. Offley and your Servant for high treason but as fully disproved. I hope you may never have

occasion to trye howe much you have oblidged mee to bee,

" Your most ffaithfull and humble Servant,

" Robert Cotton."

" Honoured Sir,

" After the great obligation you layed upon mee for giving such great Bayle for mee, I cannot but give you notice that this daye My Lord Delamer Mr. Offely and myself appeared at the King's Bench where wee weare all discharged, and an Endictment or Information of perjury preffered against Saxon who accused us. I hope you will never have occasion to use your ffriends on the like account but you may be confident on all occasions you will find me

" Your most obliged Cosen and humble Servant

" Robert Cotton.

" The prosecution of Saxon is by his Majties order."

The following letter appears also to refer to the trial.

" *July* 28, 1685.

" Honoured Sir,

" Your oblidging letter has given grate satisfaction bringing the news of your healthe and that our frends at Doddington are well—which I pray God long continue. On friday last my Lord went towards London with much cheerfullness and saide as he did formally that if innocence would prove a possession he was secure however he desired both he and his frends might submit with all patience to the will of God, for if death came he hoped it would not be a surprise to him, his poore lady went after him on Sunday but if she herd by the way that he was not in the tower she desired to return back agane. But as yet we have herd no more the reason, he

declared why he absconded was, this for fear of imprisonment which he saide was as bad as Deathe to him and in that Junture he writ to my Lord Presedent that he would appear might he have his liberty : and this was before the Rebells weare taken and since he writ to the same purpose so that they may find by it he had no decine of riseing which his Enemies say he had. But this post bringing the news of the Lords being secured makes us feare it may be his fortuen too, but all we can do is to beg of God to fit us for the worst and support his people in their afflixion and we have then greate reason to thinke that He will in the end turn and order all for the Best. My Cosin Ravenscrofts are here, they give you all their service. My Cos Mary Desires the favour of my Cosen Bety Glegg to make her a bottel of surrop of Clove giliflower and she will return her the sugar with many thanks and if yours do not hit this year if she can procure her any she will take it for a great favour. The whole service of this Famely attends all at Doddington which is all the trobbell you shall receive at present but to beg your beliefe that I am your most affectionate Nece and Humble servant

" C. MAINWARING.

" My servic to Cosen Bety. We herd this post from our frends in London and they are all very well I thank God and desire this week to go to Tunbridg."

The trial of Lord Delamere in which Sir Robert Cotton had been so immediately concerned, had taken place in January 1686. In the two years that elapsed between that time and his further correspondence, events had crowded thick and fast for England. His letters, relating as they do almost entirely to local affairs, must be studied in the wider light of the contemporary history

of the time. The king (James II), driven to extremity, had directed the Chancellor to issue writs for a free Parliament and granted pardon to all rebels, with permission to serve as representatives on the same. At the same time he was secretly making preparations for his own flight. On November 5, 1688, William of Orange landed at Torbay and was slowly advancing towards London, and on December 8, the very day after Cotton wrote his letter, the Commissioners of James and William met at Hungerford; there were indeed many who would echo the prayer "I pray God restore our religion, liberties, and properties with a happy peace." Before he penned the second, William and Mary had been crowned joint sovereigns, Scotland and Ireland were in arms for the deposed monarch, and James had convened a Parliament in Dublin.

"*December* 7, 1688.

"Honoured Sir,

"By the first post after I saw his Majestys Proclamation intimateing his intention to call a Parliament I writt to desire Mr. Platt to moove such Burgesses and freeholders as have votes in Denbighshire to reserve their votes free till there may bee a meeteing. In hopes there may bee such persons Agreed upon as shall bee most fitt for that service I desired him to shewe you my letter, reserveing my letter to you till there should bee more certaintie by the Ishuing out the writts which weare expected to be seal'd on Monday last but I do not heare anything more of them and indeed cannot Conceive how a free Parliament can in this Juncture of time bee either chosen or sett with ffreedome. There has been some disorder in Salop where the rabble have broke into a house and burnt a considerable quantity of

bookes belonging to a Popish recusant. They saye that Mr. Langley the High Sheriff of the Countie is at the Heade of a Considerable force of Armed men who visit the Romish Gentry of that Country but doe not heare of any special disorder from any of his Company. He say'd his or part of his company will go to Powys Castle and that in the meane time Sir Frauncis B— takes care to secure the towne placing guards at the gates etc. My Lord Derby ordered the Militia of his Countye to meete part at Nantwich and part at Knotesford, but Mr. —— with his company ordered the light horse to Chester as I heare, under Sir Philip Eggerton and Captain Needham where they now are. I am glad to heare you are soe quiet. I pray God restore our religion, Liberties and properties with a happie peace. There is a speech of the hostile Landing in Ireland, but I think it not yet true there should be a meeting of the Gentry. I pray you give me Notice of it, Who am Sir,

"Your Humble Cozen,

"Robert Cotton.

"*December the 7th*, 1688.

"Did write to my sister Salisbury and to my Agent Mr. Lloyd to the same effect. Do not fail to allow me to hear of your good cause."

III

Joshua Edisbury, methodical in small matters, was hopelessly lax in those of greater importance. Year by year he involved himself more deeply in debt, day by day he dated and docketed his correspondence, and it is the addresses of those letters which give the clue to his whereabouts during the years that elapsed from the

building of Erthig Hall until his final disappearance from the scene.

"Att the Goulden Ball
"Gravell Street"

is the most frequent, but varied occasionally by

"Mr Arnalds
"Boswell Court
"Littel Lincoln's Inn feilds."

In 1697 he was at Erthig, and the last letter of all written in May 1716 is addressed to the "Blew Spires Old Bayley."

During his absence Kenrick and Francis, sons of his Uncle Richard of the Three Colts, London, Draper, occupied Erthig, finding a refuge there from their creditors. Both were elderly men, married and with grown-up children, but their responsibilities lay lightly upon them, while they rode the horses, drank the wine, and smoked the tobacco of their generous relative. They were, however, genuinely attached to him, looked after his interests, and wrote long letters which must have been more than welcome to their exiled host. Kenrick described as of Grofft y Castell, near Gresford, had parted with his share of the family estate at Hafod y Bwch to his brother, Francis. He was a graduate of Jesus College Oxford, a Socinian in religion, a mechanician by choice. Whether he lacked real genius, or the time was not yet ripe for his newly invented machinery, certain it is he lost, not made, money by his patents; in the end he obtained some small employment, and appears to have made an effort to pay off his debts.

Smoking, cock-fighting, happy-go-lucky Francis was a more unsatisfactory person even than his brother " Ken." He cheerfully washed his hands of all responsibility concerning his children, and never, as far as is known, made any attempt to retrieve his position ; his ambitions were bounded by the raising of " Gilpin " fowls, his pleasures limited to junketing and tobacco. " My skill," he says, " lies in my pen." There is truth in this statement ; his correspondence is voluminous, entertaining, and legible.

There is no allusion in the letters to the family of Francis Edisbury's wife Eleanor Jones ; but Kenrick makes an objection to going into partnership with his brother-(in-law) whose name was Cooper. Only by the most careful perusal of every sentence in the Edisbury letters has it been possible to disentangle the fortunes of the fourteen children of Kenrick and Francis ; more particularly as with a most lamentable lack of originality there were among them two Kenricks, two Richards, three Johns, two Annes, and two Eleanors.

Richard Edisbury, the eldest son of Kenrick of Groff y Castell, has contributed nothing to the correspondence, but Richard, son of Francis, was a man with a grievance on which subject he wrote at great length. Kenrick, the second son of Kenrick, was a respectable public servant ; Kenrick son of Francis, a rolling stone. Nothing is known concerning the three Johns, unless " Brother Joe " is identified as one of them.

An error in the pedigree describes Anne wife of the Rev. Timothy Thomas, as a daughter of Francis ; but Anne Thomas was daughter of Kenrick, while Anne, daughter of Francis, married another clergyman, the Rev. Thomas

Pocock. Grace, described as living unmarried in September 1693, was in 1695 preparing to marry. Eleanor was the wife of Mr. Thomas Davies of Hanmer, "my son Davies" referred to by Francis. This by the most diligent researches appears to account for all except three members of the Edisbury family, who all vanished from the scene before the final downfall of the Head of the House.

Not the least important member of the Erthig household during the Master's absence was "the Widdow" Elizabeth Lea, supposed to be the widow of Mr. Henry Lea of Dernfold, Cheshire. Mrs. Edisbury had a connection of this name, for in a "Mainwaring" letter comes the information "Lady Glegg and her sister Lea are gone to Ireland." Were these Mrs. Leas one and the same person? Elizabeth was illiterate, but not more so than some other gentlewomen of her day; handwriting was not a strong point with either Joshua Edisbury or his wife, formality also was characteristic of the time. Whether, therefore, Mrs. Lea the housekeeper was a servant or a relation it is not easy to decide. Difficult as it has been to decipher her scrawls where the unpunctuated sentences have the interminable sequence of garrulous conversation, they reward the effort by their naïve and detailed description of everyday domestic life.

FRANCIS EDISBURY *to* JOSHUA EDISBURY

"*November* 8, 1692.

"HONOURED SIR,

"You might well think I had little regard of my son when he was in soe good hands in not writing to him in all this time; truly I have made several essayes

which did not please me and soe did not send till last post and though that be the best advice I could give yet is not soe full as I could wish but I question not my defect will be made up in yours. The sodding of the Court was finished this morning the wetness of the weather hindering it being done sooner. My cozen Lloyd came from Botrythan yesterday but I suppose Ned call'd at the Leadworks and will be at home this night. next post I hope to give you an account of that concern. John Griffiths was yesterday at the wood and tells me there is about 60 cord down but Moor sends noe cutters. I advis'd him to acquaint him with it. I have Moors bond for the payment of the mony according to the articles but noe bond for performance of the articles which I suppose should have been had. John Griffith says he is asham'd of being soe idle as he is at Erthigg not having business enough and yet cannot be from there; he thinks there is noe need of Rowland but John Ellis tel's him he use to have one or two constantly, soe that he would have your orders. the teams have done nothing in his absence but serve John Ellis wiz clods and sand and since till now John Matthews has been about his own business. He sayes he hopes to find gravell by the tree wiz the seat at the top of the hill, in the ditch which will be more convenient than to goe so farr as the brook and there will be earth enough to fill it hard by, he tels me you spake once of having that Elm tree down but will not meddle wiz that till he heare further from you, and desires you to give him particular orders as how he shall imploy himselfe that there may be something to be seen when you come home for at present he has not halfe his hands full. Mrs. Lea has been much out of order wiz a cold since you went (that day) and truely sometimes very bad. S[r] Griffith Jeffreys has gotten some projector or contriver for gardens and platforms but has begun very

roughly having pulled down the gate by the road and done a great deal of walling about the house. I see the person, his name is Mudd and formerly belonged to the Duke of Beaufort I told him I thought Sir Griffith would lay out his mony more freely upon a fine thing than an act of charity, his reply was he would make a very fine thing there but if he found him slacken either his fancy or purse he would leave him next day, this all I can give you an account of at present . . .

" Francis Edisbury."

" *January* 1/93.

" Honoured Sir,

" I hope you have received mine concerning Dick's business at Plymouth. I have wrote to Sir John Trevor about it but expect noe answer from him. I beg when you have a conveniency of discoursing him you would be pleas'd to give me your answer. I have been and must continue this Xmas at Mr. Roberts who gives you his service. We are at Hafod y bwch very merry, noe drinking, our hours for bed between 9 and 10 at farthest be pleas'd to send mee 6 or 8 lbs of ordinary tobacco. I hope I may gett my own smoak clear in the sale of some . . ."

" *January* 27/93.

" Honoured Sir,

" I am more than you may fancy concern'd I have not received a letter from you since you went for London yet know not the reason though I am apt to think you have heard something of mee (yet cannot imagine what) that may be the occasion of it, for the enjoyment of your friends in London never yet took your thoughts off those in the countrey, therefore if there be any such thing for wee are full of made news here, I beg you would let me know it. I may gain by your letter though chiding, but can reap nothing but

dis-satisfaction by your silence. I wonder you should think I should have the confidence to write you a lye for Mrs Lee told mee you gave equall creditt to the news I wrote you of her to that of the burning of the Red Lion in Wrexham till she satisfy'd you herself that I had from the family this I am about to acquaint you, as to a report but from severall and I hear very true. Robinson the joyner is dead. Anne Kadwallader ow'd him £40, he left her £20 and the other £20 to his and her grandchild if she be able to pay it.

" John Ellis has been very ill a long while, they say not like to recover whereby the garden and trees are very backward and much out of order. Wee have a great deal of Red Lyon news among which that John Griffith was one night at his father's and went away the next morning. . . ."

" *February* 2/93.

" Honoured Sir,

" I joyfully received your letter at Halghton and though I have not mony to spare I had at any time rather part with a groat for a letter than a meals' meat as to the mony from Mr. Yale or any else I thought you had allowed of it formerly for I think it much better to have my debt in one hand and lesse chargeable than in soe many as it is for most of them doe or threaten to sue me soe that it will fall heavy at last I must be forced to be confined the remaining part of my dayes whereas were I once more clear'd what I should run on to pay my debts would think nothing too much to get my livelyhood by some place which I suppose you or some other freind may procure mee you know where my talent lyes which is cheifly in my pen however let things happen as they will I shall not doe anything contrary to your, advice or consent. Pray Sir be pleased to let me know how Dick's business goes forward. . . .

"My humble service to Dr. Edisbury and all your family. Erthigg looks very empty without you. I should be very glad of a little tobacco, Wrexham tobacco being very bad at the rate. My blessing to Ken.

"Francis Edisbury."

"Honoured Sir, "*February* 24. 93.

"I wrote you a letter the day before I received yours concerning the cocks and soe was forced to subscribe an answer to that and another I sent to give you an account that Gilping hen proves not hard but however I can procure a pair large cocks that are good. I gave you notice of my condition in the countrey my creditors being very sharp upon mee and threaten mee very hard which will be very chargeable being soe many to what it would be if in one hand wherfore I must beg of you to continue your kindnesse to mee this one time and you may have a mortgage upon this land and your payments shall be my son Davies. I thank you for your care and the trouble about Ken as to his employment. I refer it wholly to you being a more competent judge in all affaires than I can any way pretend to. Either 3 or 4 cocks shall be sent to Mr. Housman soon enough to be fed against the time. I will send this day to know when they must be there.

"I am your most affectionate and most
obliged Cousen and servant,

"Francis Edisbury.

"My humble service to the Doctor, my brother, Coz Betty, little Miss, Coz Martha, Coz. Grace, Coz. Ermine, etc. My blessing to Ken pray pardon my scarcity of paper for I had noe more, had I had room I would have given the account of the great wedding kept at Thomas Dykes. She dances high, very fine but her vertues as I hear answerable to those of her family being Sir Robert Eytons grandchild."

"*March* 10. 93.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I have severall times given you an account of my condition here. I suppose you imagine I am forc[d] to make my retreat before our fair for the prevention of duns which though I may doe awhile I cannot expect to scape the lash of the law long wherfore I beg you would be pleased to clear mee this time else I'm afraid by the threatening I hear of, you will 'ere long hear of my confinement which by my removalls I can't long prevent. I design'd to send Sir John Mainwaring 3 cocks but Ambrose Lewis basely deceived mee in his promise soe that I had none but your cock at Neds the other 2 of Gilpins proving soe that I durst not send them to soe good a friend and one who I know ventures his money briskly. I am in haste being now going to a Xtning at Porkington where Mr. Robert Lloyd and Cozen Ned Owen stand Godfathers.

"Your most affectionate Cozen and servant,

"FRANCIS EDISBURY.

"My most humble service to all my friends. Mr. Robert Lloyd sold the gelding he bought a yeare agoe to Rowley this fair for £25 and a guinea."

"*March* 1, 1693.

"DEARE COSIN,

"The gardiner hath taken Cuttings of the trees according to your order, the widdow and I drinke your healthes every day, and long for your Company. . . . I assure you Erthigg is a Charming place, I have not yet stirred farther than the stable and gardens; this day I an going to dine with my Lady Eyton. . . ."

"*March* 9, 1693.

"I rode your great mare to the race Monday and Tuesday, but noe body asked the price of her, for my part

I thinke you cannot find soe good an one in her place, for the money you offer to sell her for, she is in good case considering she eats noe oates but she may be made much finer if you designe to sell her and surely she is worth more money than you mention, the Colts in the stable are all well, and I thinke will make fine horses, the 5 yeare old chesnut horse I thinke will be fittest for a pad being mightily inclined to pace, I have not been on his back but he seemes to me not to have mettle enough for a fine horse, his height is 15 hands 1 inches, the iron grey 14.2, the light grey 14.3, the dunn 3 yeare old 14.3, the black full 14 hand, the dunn filly 2 yeare old 14 hand, and I thinke she will make an extraordinarily fine mare. I thinke it were very well the 4 yeare old colts were mouthed if you send any directions about it they shall be sure to be observed, but I hope you will be downe yourselfe time enough. Dick tells me he thinkes neither of the breeding mares are in foale. Phillis hath 7 whelps . . . your gardiner thinkes your borders under the walls want muck very much. I thinke he is pretty diligent only one day he was absent at the faire, the gardens look much handsomer since he came here. I should be glad to heare when we are like to see you and what becomes of the Doctors affaire ; this with my humble service to all friends is all at present from

" Your most oblieged Cosen and humble servant,
" Kenrick Edisbury."

" *March* 12. 93.

" Honoured Sir,

" My brother yesterday received a letter from my son Dick which I have sent you enclos'd that you may know how it is wiz him and stand his friend in his business for I suppose now he has none will stick to him but your selfe and Cozen Ken ; my brother says he will write to him to give D's certificates to Commissionei

Lyddall. I am very much troubled at 2 letters from Nancy concerning mony, onely that I have it not for the Lord knows had I it she could not ask it more freely than I could willingly part wiz it to her.

"I hope I have made noe mistake in the altering of your wall trees. I did it as near your orders as my judgment would allow though the trees cut down were soe bad (if you had been at home) you would not have removed severall to put such in their places. I see none of them offer to stir yet soe that I wish they live till you come home which I hope will bee suddenly for wee want your company and the house looks melancholy without you, but I hope if occasions prevent yoe not, the season of year will give you a fair invitation.

"My humble service to Cozen Betty Glegg, little Miss the Dr. my brother and etc. Your cattle are (God willing) going tomorrow towards Congleton fair and soe by Newcastle if occasionable. Your Faulcon hath the crock extremely and almost ded. Ned has taken her home to recover her, if there be a fault it was mine onely for the hawke sake.

"Tobacco is very dear in Wrexham.

"I wrote my letter yesterday but am very glad to hear by this my brother is likely to fall into employment I am satisfied in your care of Ken and doe not question his preferment if he observes the advice of his friends. I have 2 fine cocks of Mr. Gilpings hen at least beside one that fights a prize. This day I lent him, not as I thought he would sett, but only to try Mr. Gilpin's breed. I shall know tomorrow how he come off an account of which I give you soe that if he proves well as I hope he may y' is to fight, though he has lost all his claws and soe not fitt to venture mony on you may trust to a staff with Mr Wyrley's pile at Neds of whome I have a curious stagg of the white hen which I am breeding a large Jonny hen of my own and a large hen of Mr Griffith of Brymbo very

good as he sayes. I know not where you designe to fight them but if at London they should be there now that they may recover their carriage however let me know when and they shall be dispos'd of as you please to order. I have not heard of or seen in any place I have been this Xmas of one fowl they have not caught any at Mr. Lloyd's Coy. . . .

"Francis Edisbury."

Elizabeth Lea *to* Joshua Edisbury

"*March* 2, 1694.

"Yestarday Parrock was heare, and I was so busy to aske him how he disposed of the 20/ he had to the faiar, he tould mr davis he would not give any body an acount but you. I tould him he would doe well to get it redy if he pleas'd to let mee see it. I thought it was a deal of mony, he tould mee 20/ could not sarve at such a tim, he would give a just acount of it, mr davis was fain to give him the mony becaus he went befor him, when the cattell were sould he took the mony and sealed it and gave it mee, I hope you have it by this. I tould Tomas he should not a sould the pied bullock, he say he can by chepar when he pleases heare abouts. mr Davis say you did not forbid that bullock being sould, if you had he should not, you did not resolve to send them to the Faiar befor you went. Mr Daviss bids mee tell you that the Ditchers will not goe on with the drain in the greate meadowe till he know of what breadth it must be. The Gardner is very busy and I believe will get the two gardins don quickly, that is, the seeds sow'd. I hope this fine wether will forward them. He says he must needs have 2 sithes he thinks he can make shift with what he has heare. The mellon seeds I gave him are nough and did not cum up. He is going to sowe som of his own and cowcumbers. I am sory in my harte that

Madam is so much out of order. Shuld I get Barther to provid a fatt Bullock or cow against you com, Mr Davis say that the cow that is left is very good beef. Mr francis is heare, he shall be by when Thomas coms and tak his acount for that and sumthing els. I am sory to tell you these things in deed Sir, I know it vexis you I would not willingly doe or say any thing that should give you a trouble. Mr Davis is consarned that he did not know parrock betar, he has found him out now. It is too long to trouble you with all his littell tricks. My sarvis to deare Madam, Pray god send her well at sweet Erthigg. Mr Francis is lame of his gout still, Mr Edisbury is well he says the coults are very well.

"Deare Sir, I am your most obleged sarvant, whilst

"E. Lea."

"*March* 12, 1694.

"Noe body is more sorry than I am Sir, that you are not heare now this fine wether, to see things don thear's noe heape of earth by the ould mellon bed the gardner has made 3 hott beds, and has melons anow, and he has sow'd Gillyflour seeds in one bed, the cam up very well. He sowd sum seeds of his own, but yours com up beter than his The workmen are now in the orchard diging the borders. He promisis to get all in ordr quickly. I will get a just account of Mr Davis, to send you by the next, I often tell him how the mised it about the bullocks. I tould him I was shure you had tould him you would not sell the 2 bullocks, espetially the pied one. He sayd he was in a fault about it, he confeses but J.P. perswaded him, he prayed mee to tell you that he begs pardon for it, he will not doe such a thing againe, I shall tell him about the drain quickly, He an Jo. allwas sayd the could by Betar for les mony. I doe talk more than coms to my shar to them sumetims. I am glad Madam is pritty harty, god keep her so.

I would I had her heare, I am Shur, you may promis your selfe to have good tabell beer. I wish theare might be a good lam had, your sheep must be good shur, or it is Strange the are not gon to the new pastur yet, I will send Dick to see how the wethers are befor I write againe. I sent to Cornelus to see what he had, his lams are not good, and very smal. I will send to Robert Barther, he it may be can tell whear you might have one, I will try sum good frend for mony to buy a bullok, rather then fail I have but very Litell, I pay evry week 4 work men and Dick and 2 weedrs, this week 3, and to Ned, You shall know the diffranc between the faiars, I like Mr Edisbury, well we have not much sosiaty, he sitts in the parlor with the door shutt on him, and Mr Francis with him, or in his chamber at meal, I goe in At night if the door be opun I goe in and sitt a Litell, I beleve he is a good man tho resarved, I have a great Loss of the prity warm parlor, I hope it will not be Long but it will be betar. Pray good Sir com to the Sissis (Assizes) Humphrey is well, and poor Bricksey is [ ] and harty, good Sir give my faithfull sarvis to my madam desiar her to send to James Paine for a box and a pigin had you not a fatt turky hen Sir last, I desiared madam to send me word whether I must send up any more hens or turkeys, I sens 4 hens a thursday, I found them prity good made me ventur without orders I will send about a lam befor I sent this and a wether I wish to hear thear may be extrordnery things to be had of thear kind If thear be any hearabout I will inquiar, Jo Ellis was heare yestarday, but he says he cannot work yet. The gerdiner says if you pleas to send thos setts it will doe well. I will tell him of the ould melon bed. I sopos you mean in the orchard, indeed Sir, I will not make yous of any Plat, you have a frend in wrixham will doe so much I am shur, poor mr Edisbury will crack his brains with [grubs] he is now writing out every town in

Ingland and I know not what, Mr Francis is gon tobe just now Lame of his Gout, he will get up before night. I doe not know how Mr Edisbury likes his diat, I get him one dish every diner, butter and the good ould chees. Meat is extrordnary dear, I will not tiar you out, onley my sarvis to my good Madam. I am your most

"obliged sarvant

"E. L.

"P.S. A thousand thanks Sir for moll, you are very kind to her, Pray Sir doe you alow 3 or 4 mesurs of oars at a tim to make meal for the dogs. I grumbl at Jack greavously, good Sir burn this. nan say you doe not aske for booby.

"Barther has got 9 or 10 Lambs of his own but the are not extrordny he fears, if thear be any in the nighborhoot he will send me word and he promist to look at your wethers, you shall know as soon as I can."

"Sir,

"Doe not you think you can tiar mee with your letars; I take more pleasure in reading them then soe; I cannot forbear being vext that madam has gott a could; I wondr she takes noe more care of herselfe. poor unhapy Humphry has gon a travling this hott wether as farr as [ ], wheare that is I know not, but he cam back himselfe after he had bin a day and a pece among them but he lost his collor in his jorney, I sent to look for it william went today, senc he went I saw ned from town who tould mee sum women had found it; I pray'd him to get it of her. I did as you ordrd mee Sr, spok to mr davis to continu looking about your busnes, it fell out very patt for mee to speak. poor man he is troubld about selling the bullocks ill he protests he fully intended to bring them back and went into the Town, but befor he cam back Ned had sould them, and

sayd lett him alone with his Master, he thought they knew your mind betar than he, he think he can nevar show his face to you. Jo Ellis is weak yet he says if you pleas to let him have meat heare and ly heare, he hops he may doe sumthing, and give him what you please, indeed Sir I writ such stuff to you that it cannot but make you weary reading it. I shall have goody Ralph's story to tell you befor I have don I know to tiar you out. I would I had you in the great chear in the cooll littell parlor, and my madam and mis and my husband.

"P.S. As hott at crabtree green shur today noe more of that good Sir,

"The orchard promisis very few apeals yet; I was on every sid ofton but noe great sigen of any more then at first pears a now, and the standrds that next the sumar hows are very full of blosoms the cheriss standrds I meane all the wall fruit hitt very well, yet what the hott sun may doe I cannot tell. wee can give you a sallet when you cum. Rogar has been heare sais he will com heare towards this day 7 night to do you any sarvis he can; your head groom is busy mouthing your colts, he prays mee to tell you he dos his best to them the are faiar conditiand, the iarn gray is the worst. I saw Dick mounted on the Light gray hors, and I think he thought nobody did it betar than himselfe; he was very quiat for his tim. Mr Griffith bids mee to tell you Sir that Jo ap williams widow has payd him the remainder of her rent and given security for the repars. Ashburn faiar is the 10 May. and Leek the 8 of May. Edward Ralph and his wife came heare, says a great deal of their oblegation to you, she says she will give 40 with five and more years to a master that he may get a livelyhood with, as I understand Jo had most of his cloth from them, when Tom cam away his m'r did not give him a peny, if he would bring him 80 he would take him. Now I

must bid you a good night. I am yours for ever to comand, "E. L.

"*April 27.*"

"DEAR SIR,

"I cannot blam you to be vex'd I am sorry you have the occasion, Mr Plat says you will not have any of Lady-day rent call'd for, he has but Little beside at this time, to excuse he says, Mr Griffith calls on but he has non till the chees is sould he says, I am vext at them, to keep you from your busnis at Erthig whear you are wanted very much I think, the Hawke will be redy I believe for the hills I wish it were com to that the hors is much better but he must be sattelt befor he is paced againe, he is turned to grass they say he woulde not mend in the stabell, the other colts at Pentry are very quete. Gorge told me yesttarday he was hear to get a pare of piggens for the Hawke. Dick had 9s in pigons the all live till he kills them, the have meat and water, the chery tree in the kitchen garden is allmost all dead thear is on branch reaches to the [ ] by the door, that has a good many cherys on and litle sprig coms out of the midl has som on, the next is dead to look at, the cabbig lettis I doubt will run to seed befor you cum the gardner tells mee. there will be more. I doubt he loves good ale, when you cum that I beleive will not be till then pray Sr take notice he was very sivil a good while but murder will out he could not hould longer without it, I sent Madam Lloyd some cabbig lettis today and if she will not stay for you I will send whear you order me, the lining I sent to Hallton today done in a bundel I coul not get a box. Ben is not hearty today, Mr Griffin desiers to know when the great [ ] must be burned out. mellons blossomd but do not knit well, J. E. is still weak and all his haire gone off his head allmost. I did not see him a good

while. this is all at present from your obleged faithfull Sarvant whil

"*May* 22.

"Pleas to give Madam the [ ].

"The cabbig lettis takes a good ster of oyle you must remember that Sir."

"I am sory my good Mr had 2 letar at a time, I did not design it so. I writ both the posts thear was a fault sumwhear I doubt, I sildom omit a post, I think. I tould Mr Davies the rate you sett Hancock sinc your Last I shall speak to him again and tell him Mr Plat can inform him betar, I have ofended Mr Plat, heare cam men for a leae [lease ?] 2 or 3 tims, you tould mee I must pay sum leaes, I payd him 14s for [ ] the sayd it was but Mr plat stormed and say what had I to doe, to be so busy could not I a sent to him and danced up and down his Room, I doubt I have Lost his favor, the cattell as eat Hacock, still sinc the very hard frost the doe not stir from thenc, Dick says he will be as carfull as posibl a man can, he is a very sartin man, he says he will spare the hay as well as he can, poor trusty is but poor and his back soar, and the maire to he keeps them in the house yet and he has had oats for them to get them up againe in hart, noe gardnor yet nor a word of him, Jack shall weed it or turn out which he pleasis he is not nought [knocked ?] yet, if he be he knows how it is, I bid Dick to put sumthing to eate the gras in this, I must tell you of ned becaus I hop he mends, Mr Roberts sent for him, and gave him very good advis for his own sack he tould him, and as he was of his parish, and bid him frequent the church oftenor, adeal more, I went down to him, asked him why he did not cum befor, he tould mee that he hoped he should take Mr Robert's advis Spoke very well, I doe not know whether

he has bin thear sinc at praiars or not, I shall know Dick says the filly is gen prity well of her selfe and all the colts are very well, he is a substantiall grom foe shur I am a shamed of this paper but I could not get any othar in tim I hope you will pardon it, in your

" most faithfull Sarvant,

" E. L.

" I hope my deare Lady has had her fin things. You shall receve 2 bails by James Paine, the went yestardy with 6 fatt hens in, and a box for my good mr with a fine thing in, tell him. Kay was not at hom but he Left the thing for Jack I will sent to Jane Wooly in the morning I could not posibly send to night to com back you shall know what she eays a sunday I have sent the lead to dodington the day Master went a way Mrs More sayd I must send it thear I cannot heare of a swine yet sum say the will fall affor Xmas I shall know quickly, the Spinor cannot spin so fine she says it is to noe purpos com if she cannot, shure these maids will get to thear wheel a munday or quickly, I will in quiar for a spinor if I can about Ruabon, and speak to Isabell when I can see her, you shall have a goos and a turky againe if you will be a good [garle ?] and sum hens to after that, I have a third turkey up for, my madam, let mee know how many you will have of any thing, then I can geas when youl com, no cretur Longs more for it then poor Lea dos who is yours for evar.

" God bles you and my good Master for moll Nany had like to aded she is betar now."

KENRICK EDISBURY *to* JOSHUA EDISBURY

" DEARE COSIN, " *March* 13, 1694.

" Mrs Lea tells me you expected from me an account of the Races at Farne, therefore I now send it

you. On Monday only ran a horse of Mr Masseys which he calls Bubble and rid him himself against a mare of Mr. Edgertons which he allsoe rid himselfe, Mr Massey got the plate. the next day there were 4 horses run, one of Sir Thomas Grosvenors, two of my Lord Cholmondloy's whereof Mr Edgerton rid one, and Mr Massey rid the same horse which got the plate the day before, which seemes a poore sorry little bit, the odds was two to one of Sir Thomas Grovenor's horse against all the rest, the first heate he gott, then Mr Massey desired his rider he would not shame them but (being secure of the plate) that he would only save his distance the second heate and lett them struggle for it, but he swore he would get them all if he could ; the second heate (a little before the turning towards the warehooke bridge.) Mr Massey being formost and Sir Thomas his man offering to put by him, Mr Massey rid him quite out of the way by which meanes Mr Edgerton got above 100 yards before them and held before turning the pole, and back againe to the turning beyond the warehooke bridge, then Sir Thomas his man having wated Mr Massey put up with Mr Edgerton, but he crossing rid him out of the way againe in the meane time Mr Massey makeing the best of his way, gott soe far before that he got the heate though Sir Thomas his horse was not above a length behind him at the end, the third heate Mr Massey tooke the leading at first run it through and got the plate, though Sir Thomas his horse run it very close up with him from first to last. . . . .

" Kenrick Edisbury."

" Deare Cosin, " *March* 20, 1694.

" I writ to you lately about your Mill which I am sure may be very much improoved and made to goe both together and should be glad of your order to cause it

to be done. I have rid your young horse one day to Halston and forme a better opinion of him than I had before. I believe a little corne would doe them all much good, and if you allow them any I will be sure to see them have it night and morning.

"I remaine

"Your most humble servant

"KENRICK EDISBURY."

"*April* 14, 1694.

"DEARE COSIN,

"I should before this time have given you an account that I waited on the Judges with your present and Complement who received them very kindly and were extreamely civill to me upon your account. At the Assizes I met with Ned Paddock who told me he was very sorry he had displeased you and is very desirous to doe you any service he can and desired me to write to you to let you know it, which I promised him to doe but hitherto been diverted by waiteing on the sheriff home and goeing to the wood-house. I am now returned to Erthigg and (that Ned may not suffer for my fault) I shall forbear sending for Roger Jones till I know your answer whether you will employ Ned Paddock or not, upon his submission to you—Your presence here is extreamely desired; which only is wanting to make Erthigg the pleasantest place in the world to Sir

"Your most affectionate Cosen and humble servant

"KENRICK EDISBURY."

"*May* 16, 1694.

"DEARE COSIN,

"I am extreamely sorry that I was so unhappy as to miss Mrs. Offley whereby the benefitt of this term is (indeed) lost if she will not pay the money without

suit, but I hope she will. As to what you say of employing my brother Cooper in the Mill matters and giveing him full instructions therein, I suppose the declarations that are in Mr. Cliffs hands will be full instructions enough for anybody, but I thinke my brother Cooper the most unfitt man I know to be employed in business that should be dispatch't, besides I know he would not be concerned unless he be furnished with money beforehand, for want of which I am utterly disabled to prosecute that, or any other business, blessed be god (through your kindness) I have a retirement here where I should live extreamely happyly if it were not for that grievious thought of being burdensome to my friends, providence hath hitherto so crosst me in all my undertakings, that I dare not hope for success in anything, otherwise this business of the Rollers would yet seeme to me to be likely (in time) to recover all, for I heare they are made and approoved of, in many places, but I am at present in noe manner of condition to prosecute it.

"Your elder colt hath had a mischance it is a small strain in the shoulder so that Roger Jones doth not thinke fitt at present to goe on with the paceing of him, I thinke he will be soon well for he halts very little, Yesterday we turned him into the Paddock and tooke him out at night and soe we intend to continue and if he recover not in a little time I suppose he must be rowelled but that will not be done without your order. I thinke there is noe doubt of his takeing a very fine pace only he is apt to lave with his fore feete but Roger Jones sith he doubts not but he shall take him off it. Your 2 three yeare olds are turned into the field behind the brick-field where (they tell me) they were last yeare. I thinke the fence very low to keepe stone horses but Mr Griffith saith the man hath promised him there shall noe horses goe in the next field. I spoke yesterday with Mr Platt about sending you up mony but he tells me

he hath none nor doth not expect to receive any, unless you will give order for receiving your last yeares rent, which he says you formerly forbid, he tells me your tenant at Pentre'r hath not sold his cheese, and Moor will not be seene neither doth he think he can pay any money. This is all at present from

"Your most affectionate Cosen

"KENRICK EDISBURY."

"*June 6th*, 1694.

"DEARE COUSIN,

"I received yours of 2nd instant by which I perceive you expect an account from me concerning Madame Offley and Mr Holland which I cannot possibly give you because I am now confined to Erthigg for want of money, for I assure you I am master of but one shilling, which is too small a stock to venture abroad with, I went last week into Shropshire in hopes to have gotten a little money of Mr. Kinaston of Hordley and Mr. Owen of Cundover who have made Rolling Carts, but they both put me off at present, pretending not to be fully satisfied that any thing was due to me, though I shewed them my Pattent, soe that my going was but the occasion of spending that little money I had left, I intend to goe this day to see if I can borrow £20 of Franck Plat, if he lends it me I will goe againe into Cheshire to speake with Mrs Offley, and at my returne goe to Lancashire to demand the money of Mr Holland, but I thinke not to goe till I have an answer to this letter, therefore pray (if you would have me goe) let me heare from you by the next post. I believe you may have an account of Mrs. Offley's resolution from Sargeant Birch who I suppose may by this time be in towne, and as for Socinianisme it is not easy for me to avoyd discoursing of it, because everybody bates me about it, but I doe not willingly speake of it unless with such as I have

reason to expect instruction from, it is certainly our greatest concernement to know God, and his son Jesus Christ, for this our Saviour tells us is life eternall, which I hope we shall both attaine to by the satisfaction our blessed Saviour hath made to Allmighty God for our sins, which I agree with you is that by which only we can be saved, this is all at present from

" Your most affectionate Cosen and
humble servant
" Kenrick Edisbury."

While the sympathy of every reader must be enlisted in the fortunes of Richard Edisbury, they would hardly care to be involved in his interminable correspondence. Richard's whole happiness (at least so he thought at the time) depended on his obtaining a certain small post (Clerk to the Ropeyards), and promotion, like kissing, is apt to go less by merit than by favour. There were other applicants, one man running his nephew, another his son-in-law. Richard was a quite respectable and worthy young man, he repaid the ten pounds lent him by his Uncle, (an unheard of event in the Edisbury circle), and held sound if pedantically expressed opinions on the unseemly behaviour of his nearest relations. He was in love, but too poor to venture to declare his passion, and so sought to move heaven and earth, and especially Sir John Trevor, to further his suit.

The first three letters of this series concern the misdoings of Kenrick Edisbury, and younger brother of Richard, but unlike him in every respect.

"Plymouth.

"HONOURED SIR,

"Hearing my brother is come to London makes me desireous to know whether any Employ is gott yet for him, being it would be very Scandelous if he should returne home to my father, and live a lazy and Idle life as he hath done hitherto; which he may very well be ashamed of; for I verily beleive that had I the greatest Estate in the world, I could not live long without an Employ. If you should think fitt to put him to Sea, a [Volunteer] with the King's letter, I think it would do very well, and am acquainted with many Comanders that will be very kind to him, and would do (in my opinion) much better than to bee a Clerke of a Man of Warr for they comonly come to little or no preferment;

"RICHARD EDISBURY."

"HONOURED SIR,

"I am very much perplexd at your letter about Ken, I cannot imagine what it should be, I hope noe worse than idlenesse and gadding, which in themselves are bad enough, and will in a little time work him into all inconveniencys. I have wrote him something of my mind, but know not what to particularise, but fear the worst, pray be pleased to lett mee know what it is for I shall be much disturb'd till I doe,

"I will send what fowl I can get from the 'coy and as often as I can, I shall be thereabout all Xmas, but Fernhill will be my head quarters. I intend to send some to Dodington.

"I am your most affectionate, though
discontented Cozen and servant,

"FRANCIS EDISBURY."

"My humble service to Cozen Betty, little Miss, Cozen Ermine, the Doctor, my brother, etc.

"I wrote to you from Fernhill, wherein I mentiond some tobacco, I should be very glad of some this Xmas, if you please to send mee any."

"Southwark.

"SIR,

"This comes, (according to my yesterday's promise), to give you all the information I can of my Brother Ken's intrigue; he lay out of his lodging last night, which he has done often since his being with us, and being chid for it by his Sister, he allways affirmed that he lay with one, Shepheard, who (as I understand) is the Doctors Sub-Clerk; I have examined the maid about the matter, and she tells me all that she knows is, that her name (viz., his Mistress's) is Anne Bayley, and that she came over with him a passenger in the same ship from Virginia; the maid says she lives in Covent-Garden, but cannot particularise the place or house; I believe if you'l give yourselfe the trouble to speake with, or write to, Captain Hartnoll, he'll give you all the satisfaction you can have in this affair; Nay, I beleive this Shepheard, (who is Mr Clements' Clerk att Symon's Inn), can inform you of all matters relateing to this buissness as well as any body else: I am realy soe affear'd for my brother, that I would willingly doe anything that might conduce to his good; I deseign to waite on Captain Hartnoll att Ratcliffe, in order to know his sentiments of this woman, but it shall be at a distance, not mentioning att all my brother's name; I'll endeavour to know of him where she lives; but I had almost forgott to tell you that I am very well sure of how Miss Murray can tell you as much as Ken himselfe, for he told our maid, that she was privy to the whole intrigue. This is all I can inform you off, concerning this affair. My Frances gives you her respect and love which I hope

you'll allsoe accept of from your most respectfull and Affectionate Kinsman, "THOMAS POCOCK."

RICHARD EDISBURY *to* JOSHUA EDISBURY.

"Plymouth,
"*January* 30, 1693.

"DEAR SIR,

"I had the Honour of yours last post but could not have the time to answer it till now. I return you hearty thanks for all your favours and kindnesses on my behalf. I am cautious of giving my friends too much trouble by tiring their patience in too oft writing to them on the same subject but am advised by our officers here to acquaint them of anything that may be a stop or block in my way, as I was advised by them to acquaint my friends of Our Comissioner Greenhill being att London with his son in order to gett him that place; it is believed he is likely to gett it for him thro' the great Interest he hath in the Comissioners of Admiralty, in case Sir John Trevor do not prevent him, which I accordingly writt you of lately and it was the general opinion of all my friends here that Sir John Trevor ought to be advised hereof so that I do not write thus often to my friends of my own accord but forst thereto by the advice of very good friends here — I am extreamely sorry that things should still soe goe with my Father and that he runs himself into so much debt and never endeavours the repaying it nor the interest neither which troubles me very much, and have all along been very cautious of giving him any cause of difference whatsoever, it being always fatal betwixt parents and children; and thro' the reverence and Duty I bear to him have gone soe farr in that account that I thought really he could not in conscience put me to any more trouble: but that he would endeavour to repay his debts as he

often in his letters promissed me he would and did not question but to ease me of all debts in time . . . . . .

"I shall in a post or 2 send you a bill for the £10 you lent me with abundance of thanks, so with my most humble service to you and all friends in general

"Your most affectionate kinsman and
humble servant
"Richard Edisbury.

"There is one Esq. Bond of Hollwood in Cornwall of a great Estate who hath been extra kind to me by his and his Ladye's inviteing me often to Hollwood his Country House where I have been entertained extra staying there weeks together: he was with us here this week and told me he was going for London and would need have a token from me of some at London. I at last give him one to my Cousin Ken. and desired him to enquire for him at your House att the Golden Ball in Gravell St. on purpose to introduce him to your company who when you see hope you will entertain him kindly not knowing how to requite him in the least than to bring him into your acquaintance, yet I fear his business will not give him time to see you promisy me he will endeavour to take an opportunity therto. He stays at London but 8 or 10 days and returns."

"Plymouth,
"25 *March*, 1694.

"Hon. Sir,

"I acquainted my father last post of an affair thought long ago to intimate; but thought convenien all this time to disclose it till now considering the dange of delaying so long lest another break his mind befor me, which is my having had a reale affection for a Youn Lady in this towne 3 or 4 years by which continueir still more and more towards her, so that would willing

break my mind either to her or her father betimes least by delaying another make known his love before me (for she is beloved by many) but first would be advised from my father and yourselfe herein and whether it be more proper in discovering my mind to them in the state I am or to let it alone till I forsee how my affaire of the Rope yard will go, the Lady is of a very good family and her father a very fine Gentleman and hath several employs and a great Merchant here, but the number of children which he hath being 9 suppose he cannot give her upwards of 5 or 600 but in process of time (he being still as it were a young man) may add much to this fortune: to which I desire to hear from you at your leisure in this my present condicon before you leave the town,

"Your most affectionate kinsman and
humble servant
"RICHARD EDISBURY."

"*May 7th*, 1694.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I write you this not without some griefe at present and which makes me againe more earnestly write you concerning Sir John Trevor, as without his assistance I shall not only loose the Employ but likewise a beautifull young Lady who I have so cordially lovd ever since I knew her and to whom my affection still increases, but am grieved to the heart, there haveing been this week a gentleman with her father to demand her in marriage for his son who hath an Estate of about £100 per annum and they seeme inclinable to the match on both sides; so that I know not what to do herein; haveing never revealed my mind by word of mouth or writing, either to herself or father; and seeing itt lyes in Sir John Trevor's Interest to make me happy by getting me that Employ. I do humbly desire you will acquaint

him of the reason why I so importunately desire his favour therein, which may put him the more forward in doing me that kindness. There hath been 2 Officers appointed of late one whereof who belongs to Dartmouth is made Muster-Master there, and another of Falmouth is made Muster-Master of that place, so you may perceive it will be hard for one to get an Employ without the Interest of some great freind; so, hopeing you will give me some comfortable advice in this my present condicon before you leave the Towne, rest,

"Your ever affectionate Kinsman and
humble servant
"Richard Edisbury.

"My humble service to all freinds. Since the above and just upon the closing up of this came in purser Glegg who gives you his humble service. On the other side is a Coppy of a Warrant for an Officer of a Man of Warr whereby you may perceive they have Warrants for some places long before their is occasion for them. Our Storekeeper that is now present had his warrant above a 12 month before he came hither.

"You see the Warrant is dated 13 January 1692 but is not in pay till April 1694."

Kenrick Edisbury, who held some office under the Navy Board, writes usually from that address; in the present instance, however, he had been sent down to Portsmouth on some business connected with the Naval Manœuvres, the sequel to which is described in two interesting letters from his brother Richard.

"Portsmouth,
"*April* 29, 1694.

"Honoured Sir,

"Receiving the Navy Boards directions to go forthwith for Portsmouth and having severale Orders to

despatch the day before my departure relating to the paying of the fleet which would not have been comply'd with had I not continued at my duty ; which was the only occasion of my not waiting on you, and I pray you'l pardon the fault ; So what you mention in course of yours about Mr Harding's daughter I do assure you that notwithstanding it has been so Confidantly reported there is not one word of truth in it, but humbly thank you for the Care I perceive you have for me ; neither have I any inclination to Matrimony with any other woman on any scor ; but when I have shall further inform you before tis gone so farr as you have been told this has.

" The fleet is now together and most of the flaggs flying and dont doubt if you will be pleased to come here, will, when you have seen them think it worth your observation, therefore desire youl honour me with your Company being now a good time of year and but two days easy journey my sudden coming out of town also hindered the sending my father some necessarys which was at my lodgings of buying him a hatt which if will not be too troublesome pray you lay out about thirty shillings in one for Him which add to your favour don to Sir

" Your faithfull and most obedient
servant
" Kenrick Edisbury."

" Plymouth,
" 8 *May*, 1694.

" Honoured Sir,

" This morning their Majesties Shipp Canterbury came into Port adviseing that Admiral Russell was off the Harbour with 37 Saile of Men of Warr bound to the Westward : And this evening came in a Dutch fly boate last from Bilboa who 8 days since fell in with a fleet of Sweeds in their passage homewards, the day after they being to windward saw 40 saile of french men of Warr

with 2 flaggs; one had a White flag att fore topmast head; another att Mizen topmast head; they spoke with another shipp (a Sweed I suppose) that fell in with the french fleete, and told them that they were bound for the Straites.

"I am in haste.

"Your most affectionate Kinsman
and humble Servant
"Richard Edisbury.

"Note. I have not seen Mr Glegg this day but left your letter for him at his Lodgings. My service to all friends."

"Falmouth,
"9 *June*, 1694.

"This evening came in here a Shipp from Virginia. The Master relates that on the 6th. Inst. at evening he met our Grand fleet about 25 Leagues S W by Due S from the Lizzard. Steering the same Course; that on the 7th in the morning the Lenox came up with him, and advised him to steere for Ushant to avoid the ffrench Capers; for that he would meet there a Squadron under Sir Cloudesly Shovell, or at least some of his Scouts; that day he had sight of 10 French Men of Warr, about 50 Gunns each which made from him suspecting him for a Scout; that on the 8th standing in with Ushant about 9 in the morning heard from about Brest a most prodigious Noise of gunns or if possible what was more terrible; he stood to the Northward and tho' he stood off with a brisk gale yet the sound of the Guns failed not in 4 hours and then the Wind turned N.E."

"Plymouth,
"*Sunday* 10 *June*, '94.

"Honoured Sir,

"The above is a copy of a letter came hither from Falmouth which I thought fitt to send you seing most

people earnestly make enquiry of news from our ffleet, since that put to the Westward which is all I hear from them at present but when further News comes I shall advise you thereof. I suppose your Joury to the Bath will now be suddenly, so hope you will see somewhat done on my business that may give me hopes of attaining it before you leave the town. So with my humble service to all friends being in haste rest

" Your most loving kinsman and servant,

" Richard Edisbury.

" You may please to let the Secretary know some how that I shall be very grateful if he please to befriend me therin.

" If the Doctor have any news pray tell him I have a dismall letter from Pocock.

" Our fleet is come back well loaded 300 men whereof 100 are killed, for the French were too strong for us they have sent a dutch shipp of warr. Lord Denby's shipp had a miraculous escape, the engineer la Mott is killed."

Evidence of a fairly direct kind testifies to the conclusion that Anne, daughter of Francis, was not the Anne Edisbury described in the pedigree as having been married at Wrexham.

The true story of Anne, of her husband the Rev. Thomas Pocock, and the wicked Mrs. Maurice, might have been invented by Defoe. This Anne was the sister of Kenrick " ne'er do weel," on whose evil doings the parson his brother-in-law played the spy. She is the " Nancy " who asked but failed to get help from the ever impecunious Francis, and her husband in one place calls her Frances, which may therefore have been her second baptismal name.

The story opens with a frantic appeal from Anne, backed by a letter from her friend Mrs. Harrington, that her debt may be paid without her husband's knowledge. This was on January 15, 1694. Less than four months later it was Pocock himself clamouring for assistance, and in June he was actually arrested while coming to plead his cause, and his well justified condemnation of Mrs. Maurice is mingled with requests for clerical preferment away from the temptation and entanglements of Town.

These letters of Mr. Pocock are a quite recent discovery made in the Autumn of 1912 by the present mistress of Erthig while rummaging in the attic in search of forgotten stores.

"*January* 18, 1694,
"*Thursday morning.*

"SIR,

"I was very loath to give you the trouble of this but that I cannot tell what to do, the man that I owe the £15 will not stay any longer than this day for his money without arresting Mr. Pocock which will make us talked of all over Southwark and besides may make a difference between us as long as we live. I have above £20 oweing me but cannot get any of it in yet. If you will be pleased to lay down the money I will bring it you as I receive it. I am promised £10 of it a Friday next come fortnight. I writ to my father and he sent me the enclosed in answer to mine; it was the money I paid for my sister, and my foolishness in lending my money made me so necessitated now. I beg your pardon for my sending to you and am

"Sir, Your most affectionate Kinswoman
and humble servant
"ANNE POCOCK."

"*February* 3, 1694.

"*For* Josua Edisbury Esq *present*

"Sir,

"The concern I have for Mrs Pocock makes me give you this trouble to acquaint you that the man she owes the £15 to will stay no longer than this night without some assurance of payment in a weekes time. Indeed Sir it will be a great charity to your Kinswoman to lay the money down for her. I fear if her Husband should know of it, it may be her utter ruin. If I could at this time have spared so much mony she should have had it of me. If she payes you not in a twelve months time, I will be obliged to paye you. She has had so much trouble in this that I am very confidant she will for the future take care how she lends her mony. She tells me you are informed that she is further in debt. I doe assure Sir I know of no more than this. I desire answer by my servant and that you will pardon this from Sir

"Your servant,

"Anne Harrington."

Thomas Pocock *to* Joshua Edisbury

"Southwark,

"*May* 12*th*, 1694.

"Sir,

"I dont question but you have heard of the unhappy circumstances my wife and I are trickd into by her correspondence with Mrs Maurice. You have heard, I suppose, how she malliciously arrested me in 40 pound action, viz., a bond for 20 paid which she deceitfully gott of my wife; I was this afternoon he referd me to his Cozen Savage, but he was not to be found I am bound to give in Bail before a judge within a week's time at farthest; if I don't, I must goe to Gayl, and I doe not know how to mannage it unless you'l be

pleas'd to stir in the affair ; I know I have the devill to deal with, all and therefore I make my recourse to god allmighty for aide and deliverance from the wickednesse of Mrs Maurice, but I hope you wont deny me your assistance ; for if you should, shee will infallibly out doe me ; indeed Sir, I am soe disturbed I know not what to do I must humbly therefore intreat you to speak with Mr Dewy and Cozen Savage to doe something in the matter before it is too late. 'Tis a very hard case on my side for me to marry a woman without a dram of fortune, and then to be sued afterwards on her account If I had not had a true love for my wife, who (setting aside this one mistake) is as good a woman as ever man had ; I say, had it not been for these considerations I should have putt an end to these troubles. Indeed I can't (without considerations) call to mind the many vexations that I have underwent by this wicked woman's contrivances. Pray, Sir, consider my case, and rid me out of these troubles, which I may modestly say I have noe ways deserved, nor brought upon myselfe,

" Your most affectionate and respectfull
Kinsman,
" Thomas Pocock."

" *May, the* 15*th*, 1694.

" Sir,

" I am well satisfied you're mistaken in this point, my wife never borrow'd any such sum of Mrs Maurice, neither has she been in a condition to lend her soe much mony ; she is (viz Maurice) soe well known as not to be in a capacity to lend her soe much mony ; she had not arrested me if Mr Dewy had not neglected to have given me information when he first arrested her, for 'tis plain she stayed allmost three weeks before she commenced her action, which is, I think, an undenyable consequence that she expected proposalls of an agreement, and if

Mr Dewy had given due information of the promises this affair had been composed, Madam Harrington, her servants and severall others can testifie how the old woman haunted my wife continually, not upon a dunning account, but the contrary. 'Tis my great misfortune to be thus entangled. I livd a happy and sedate life before this alliance, and I don't dought but what (notwithstanding this misfortune it being once composed) to reap all the happyness that can be expected from a good wife; setting aside this one mis-management she is for prudence and vertue as good (perhaps as any of her sex); there is noe one person in the world but have had their failings, nay, there is none but have att one time or other comitted some great blunder or other; I hope you'l allow my dear Nancy her *primum tempus*, for I beleive there is noe body but have one time or other comitte as great a fault as this, tho' theirs has been more fortunate than poor Nancye's. I have a greate deal more to say in vindication of Nancy's innocent nature, but this being a buissy day, I humbly crave leave to subscribe myselfe in haste your most respectfull and affectionate kinsman "THOMAS POCOCK.

"If you please, I'le waite on you this afternoon att 5, att Symond's Inn, or where else you shall name. I did but just now receive yours of the 14th."

"*June 13th*, 1694.

"SIR,

"As I was comeing yesterday to waite on you, I was arrested by Mr Bradshaw just by your door; I was very much surprised to be so harassed, for they sent a paper to my lodgeing to tell me the Doctor would speak with me att your Lodgeing; I came away in a great deal of joy, thinkeing it had been concerning a place which the Doctor spoke to me off the last time I saw him. They hurried me away to a house behind

Clare-market, where I was forced to send for the Doctor you being not at home, to help and direct me ; This was what they threat'ned so long ; I was not bound to put in bail, but onley an appearance ; They arrested mee in two actions which came allways to 25/-, of which the Doctor sent me 19/- the remaining six shillings to pay 'em. If I had had the money either with me or att home, I woud not have been so bold with him, but he refuseing to pay it the Officer came to me this afternoon to demand it, and if not payd tomorrow, I shall then be arrested for that ; and truely, Sir, I have not half soe much in the world. I beleive never any man was soe un-happy as I, (especially by the fault of these) ; All the scandals, injurys by arresting me, haveing me before Justices, I say, all that never dejected me so much as the Doctors denying to satisfie me in so small a matter, Oh : for you, Sir, pitty our unhappy circumstances, and stand by us now, and we will try by this to manage ourselves with more prudence for the future, I am sure if we were more free from these wicked people, my dear Francis would make me an happy man I am afraid Sir, if I am not eased of this burthen poor Nanny will break her heart ; your most unfortunate, but respectful kinsman, "THOMAS POCOCK."

"SIR,

"When I was last with Mr Dewy it was then agreed (seeing Mrs Maurice had first desired an agreement) if we cou'd, to make an end of this unhappy matter ; I don't know what Mrs Maurice's proposalls may be, I am very unwilling to lose my mony, and allow her any compensation for the bond that would be an abominashon upon me that I was forcd to buy a wife, I am sure, notwithstanding their asseverations of its being an absolute bond, as the obligation mentioned onely the payment of the mony at or upon Marridge with

me, which thing is un-denyable testimony of the constitution upon which it was given. But Sir, if you wish to give me your advice I shall be very willing to comply with whatsoever you shall think to be most meet or convenient. I do further intreat you to remind the Doctor of my affair; I am sure he wants spurring, for he told me himself that if he had vigorously followed the Bishop of Rochester he had carried Woolwich, and I am very well satisfied he might, for it was gaind by one who made his application at least three weeks after I inform'd the Doctor of a vacancy; He was in hopes he had gotten one for me the last time he told me; I long to be rid of this town; for I am sure I shall never be happy till I am, besides I have cause to fear I shall never be free from the frauds and malice of Mrs Maurice till then; could he (the Doctor) have disposed of me before, it had prevented these unhappy troubles; Indeed I don't enjoy my health here in town, and therefore should be joyful if I had a country-living, but I have too much reason to fear never to be so happy unless the Doctor does more earnestly endeavour my removale; and I think myselfe very unhappy not only in suffering as I have done so un-deservedly in that I have so little hopes to be released from a place which renders my life very uncomfortable.

"Your most respectfull kinsman,

"THOMAS POCOCK.

"Southwark, *June* 19*th*, 1694."

The other Anne, and her sister Grace, were daughters of the ingenious but impecunious Kenrick, whose youngest son "Joe" (or John) was evidently being educated at the expense of his generous uncle. Edisbury's sister, Mrs. Lloyd, contributes one letter to the series, as does also the schoolmaster, who with his letter encloses his bill.

Grace was a young lady of strong character and decided opinions, and most people will approve of her sentiments about her eccentric parent, and still more of her determination not to occupy the same house as her mother-in-law. Captain Phillipson was in Holland (with his regiment) when she wrote in Feb. 1697; but the peace of Ryswick and disbanding of the army followed soon after. Her lover indeed appears to have been already at home when the next (undated) letter was sent. Grace, like her brother Richard, was punctilious in the discharge of small debts, a virtue not possessed by other members of their family.

ANNE EDISBURY *to* JOSHUA EDISBURY

" Wrexham,
" *Jan.* 6, 1692.

" HONOURED SIR,

" My Cosen Lloyd was soe kind as to send for my Brother for this Christmas and my Lady hearing he was there had a mind to see him and sent for him there, he is very well and went from hence this morning. I was asking him some questions about his learning one night and he tould me that the usher that Mr Woodhouse hath now, doth not take much care of him, he thinkes he was as forward in his Book when the other usher went away as he is now, and that he doth not take much paines with any of the schollars that are under him unless it be two that are his favourites, he sayes that he and the rest of the boys complained of him to Mr Woodhouse, and that he said he could not turn him away till his year was out, But my Brother could not well tell when that was, he said he thought it would be at easter, he made some more complaints of the Usher

of his severity that he hath boxt him on the head till he made him deafe, and some other things of the Like nature, but I did not thinke to say a word of this to you, neither did countenance him at all in saying soe but tould him I fear'd it was his own fault in doing something that deserved it, and that masters were nessesitated to do that which it may be Children would think severe, which afterwards they would come to know was for their good, but of their carelessness I thought I ought to acquaint you, and not knowing when I might hope to be soe happy as to see you, I took that bouldness upon me of writeing to you which confidence I beg you'll pardon please to give my humble service to Mrs Glegg and Cosen Mat. Lloyd and Mis Glegg and accept of my most humble Duty to yourselfe, and believe me to be deare Sir in all gratitude

"Your obedient Neece and very humble servant

"ANNE EDISBURY."

"Wrexham,
"*Jan.* 22, 1693.

"HONOURED AND DEARE SIR,

"My Cosen Lloyd of Haghlton being here yesterday incouraged me to write to you, to give you an account of Brother Joe, which I had done long ere this but that I hoped you would be in the country quickly and therfore I thought to defer it till then for fear of being troublesome. I cant judge of the improvement he hath made in his Latten but I askt my Cosen Lloyd yesterday, what my Cozen Lloyd thought of that for I supposed he had examined him and the answer that he made me was that he had not made such an improvement as he would have had him, or as he could have wish't. My Brother says that the under schoolmaster which is over him now is very carefull, it is not long since

he is come, he says he learns a deall faster now since he came than he did before, but that which troubles me is that my Brother reads English very bad, he writes pritty well, it is what I ought not to do to commend him (he being so nearly related to me;) or else I think he deserves it, but I must tell you the character my Lady gives of him, She says she never saw such a sober tractable good humour'd child in her life as he is. . . . .

"Anne Edisbury."

Grace Edisbury *to* Joshua Edisbury

"Halghton,

"*February the 9th*, 1693.

"Honoured Sir,

"I beg your acceptance of my most humble thanks for your kinde letter, for which and all other favours, all the return I can make is but poor acknowledgements, Sir your kindness as well as Charity to my poor father, and all his, can but make me admire the goodness of the Lord to us, in raising us up such a friend, and I trust that God that has made you that instrument of soe much goodness, will bountifully reward you for it, and give us all a true sence and grateful hearts, for all favours you are pleased to confer upon us, I beg my most humble service to Madam Glegg, I was much concern'd to heare she was soe ill of a cold, and doe heartily rejoyce that she is mending, I pray God perfect her recovery, and preserve you all in health and happiness, and if it be his blessed will grant us all a happy meeting which I am sure is much long'd for by me, as well as the rest of your friends in these parts and I question not but by your selves too, as soon as convenience will permitt, I beg you'll please to present my duty to my father and give me leave to subscribe myself your obliged humble servant

"Grace Edisbury."

"Halghton,
"*January* 1694.

"HONOURED SIR,

"According to your command I make bold to give you the trouble of this, tho' in the first place I beg your pardon for defering it so long, and now I wish the account I have to give of my brother, were either answerable to your charge or your desire you have been pleased to express of his wellfair, my cosen Lloyd was soe kind as to examine him in his Latin and says he has made but little improvement this last yeare, but my brother tells me, his master is of another opinion, and says he has made good use of his time, he did not write home with him, but I hope he has ere this answered your letter, his reading english makes me feare he has not been as diligent as he might, for indeed he does read but very improperly, he commends his Master and went very willingly and chearfully to school, he writes indifferently well, tho soe like a learner that I can't tell how it will prove, I pray God reward you for your charity and if it be his will grant that my brother may have the understanding to improve it in the first place to his glory, and then to your satisfaction, and his own advantage and desire to [ ] God, he is a sober boy, and if I may be judge a good tempered one. . . .

"Your obliged humble servant
"GRACE EDISBURY.

"My poor Cozen Prue is in greate affliction for it has pleased God to visit her with the loss of her child."

The schoolmaster's letter :

"Sheriffhales,
"*December* 4, 1694.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I was glad to see your hand which satisfy[d] me of your desired recovery from your late indisposition. I never received one line from you since the 19 of October

last, but have since written to you my thoughts of him. What I last said I could do for him: I am now more confident of performing in the time then mentioned, because he is much more diligent then when I wrote it to you for a measure.

"His parts are but of a middle size, and the fault of his first teacher to read is hardly conquerable, though he is heard read almost every day, and whilst wee hold him to a deliberate view of every syllable he will read slow and true, he will soe construe a latin Author I have tried him in Tully's Offices, Ovid, Virgil as well as easier books. If I might know in what way of Scholarship you design to put him whether Law Physick or Divinity I could when you please to send next give you a more satisfactory Account For I am Worthy Sir In all sincerity

"Your humble servant
"J Woodhouse."

"N. His task is to draw into a book which he brings with him Sums of all sorts which he hath lately cast up, and write 2 or more English letters. Pray give my humblest service to good Sr Thomas Delves and my good Lady and Mr Delves I read the book sent to Sir

"Your humble servant
"J. Woodhouse."

"Harwich,
"*September 3rd*, 1696.

"Honoured Sir,

"I return you my most humble thanks for your very kinde letter. I can't yet give you any certain account about my affaires but believe in a fortnight longer I shall, I forgot in my last to give you account of my father's [ ] which my coz Owen call a 20 one, it was for 2 guineas and that with several people too, my father

is now a very good husband, but his place is not near soe good as we heard it was in the country, for it is but as the first account he gave you of it, blessed be God it is what makes him live comfortably and spares a little money which he payes as fast as he can, and the desire he has of paying his debts makes me hope if it pleases God to spair his life some years he will be out of debt, which I am sure will be a great comfort to me, my father is very kind to me, but above all his kindness in not offering me any of his socinian books, nor saying anything to me of those errors I take the most kindly, he has never said one word to me of it, my father presents his humble service to you, I would have writt to my Uncle Frank but that I don't know where he is, but pray be pleased to tell him my cosen Ken is here ill of a feavor, he is something better today, he and my sister desire their humble service to you, I am mightily obliged to [you] for your kind good advice. I hope I shall alwais be very observant of it, if what you mention in yours dont hitt I shall be sure to wait upon you when Madam Glegg comes down about a fortnight hence. I shall give you the trouble of another letter and then shall give you a more possitive answer, I beg my humble service to the Doctor and service to Mrs Lee, Mrs Ermine, I beg your pardon the faults you meet with for I have made an odd piece of stuff which if I had time to write again I would mention but I hope your kindness will make you forgive it. . . . "GRACE EDISBURY."

"Harwich,
"*November 28th*, 1696.

"HONOURED SIR,

"It is soe long now since I heard from you that I began to feare you are displeased at me which of anything in the world would be the greatest trouble to me. I have had nothing new to acquaint you with of my

affaire beside what I writ in Mrs Gleggs letter or else I would have troubled you with a letter ere this. I believe I shant be married this 3 or 4 months by reason my ffather cant give me £50, for there being some alterations to be made in the house besides furnishing from top to bottom that I feare my hundred pound wont doe all, therfore I rather choose to stay till Captain Phillipson can get mony enough to doe it, than live with his Mother, which I shall be forced to if I have not a home to goe too. I heare my Sister Thomas is delivered. I should be glad to know whether they baptize the child or noe. I think ye question not proper for me to ask of anybody but you, makes me beg the favour of you I pray Sir

"Grace Edisbury."

"*Feb.* 4, 1697.

"Honoured Sir,

"This is to acquaint you that I am near altering my condition, therefore desire your prayers and good wishes, it is the greatest change that life affords I pray God fitt me for it and grant it may be in mercy to me, I am very well satisfied as to your kindness of my share and must be soe just to him as to say I believe it will be my own fault if I am not happy with him, but its a new life and fears of my not performing it as I ought, fills me with a multitude of thoughts, Captain Phillipson is now at Holland but at his next return I believe we shall marry, my Father presents his service to you and Mrs Glegg, I beg my humble service to her, and the rest of my friends with you, pray Sir what is become of my Uncle Frank, I have not heard anything of him soe long, that I know not whether he is dead or alive, I have had one letter from him since I came here, but it was such stuff as I thought required no answer, therefore I took noe notice of it.

"I am in haste therefore will add noe more but beg leave to conclude myself your

"Obliged humble servant to command

"GRACE EDISBURY."

"HONOURED SIR,

"I give you my humble thanks for your kind wishes which I dont question will attend me whenever I change my condition, but that wont be soe soon as I thought it would when I wrot to you last, for wee resolve now to stay till Easter if I had married now it would have been inconvenient on many accounts but the principal one to me would be living with a mother in law which I never will consent to for thir often arises such differences by living togeather as never would happen with out it, soe that to the outmost of my power I will allwais prevent anything of that kind, the man that lives in the hous I am to live in refuses to come out till Lady Day, altho Captain Phillipson offered to pay the rent or doe anything else reasonable, for he would have been glad to have married me now, I heartily wish Robert Delves as good a Lady as he deserves for I really think heel make an extraordinary good husband, my humble services to Mrs Glegg. I will answer her letter quickly and desire to know to whom at London I shall pay the 40^{s} I owe you for my coach hire. I would have done it sooner but I thought you had given it me beeing you hired the whole coach. My father presents his service, he says he has answered the part of your letter relating to him. Pray Sir please to favour me with a letter now and then for though I cannot have the happiness of your company some satisfaction to

"Your humble servant

"G. EDISBURY.

"The post is going."

"Mrs Lloyd *to* Joshua Edisbury

"My deare Brother,

"I give you 100 thanks for letting me heare how you gott up, for I have been in much fear about you, wee had such bad weather, God be prais'd that you are well. I writt a letter by a man you sent to Earthigg to you, in it a bill for 10 pounds to be payd you when you would please to call for it att London, and 15/- for tobaccos. I hope you received it and doe not question in your next, but you will satisfye mee about it. Mr Lloyd desires his best service to my Cozen Glegg, and yourself, and if you will give our services to Mrs Mainwarings now I should bee glad. Patty might learn to write and dance. I heare Mr Isaac is as famous as ever he was, pray I hope Patty will be dilligent in improveing herself all maner of wayes, fo now I'me well assured she hath good helps towards it, and obedient to you, conformable and gratefull to my Cosin Glegg. My Cozen Grace has writt for some things to be sent her up, but will take noe notice of it till I heare your pleasure, when she comes down. I received a letter at Coventry from you, wherein you mention'd Jo poore Lad he went to my Lady Eyton's (she sent) but I should have been glad he had 1st learnt his Task, but it would not be I hope he learnes better at school, he is a very good child other wayes, hee reades his Bible, but very imperfectly, it's pitty, he's a fine Lad, I have enclos'd his task, by that you will make a better judgement of him.

"Mr Lloyd says if he can recover the Saker's stomach and canker, and fitt her for the Mews It is what hee desires Hee gives her the old scoureings, and will continue to doe so as he finds the effect, she shall not die if hee can help itt. Hee desires a crutch ivory head for his cane, for he has a grate value for it, the head that is on it makes it long and uneasy, and hee is loth to cutt it.

"Will and the two girls gives you ther duty and service to my cozen Glegg and Miss Glegg; Ours is a bonny girl, I bless god, coms on bravely; let mee know whether you have escaped a Cold.

"Good Brother, I am yours,

"MARTHA LLOYD.

"Mr Lloyd's and my blessing to Patty, her Brother and sisters' love. Pray tell her her Aunt Phebe enquires constantly after her affaires, if you enquired from us how my Lady, brother and Doctor did, pray lett mee know."

The note which begins "Good brother Angler" was never intended for Joshua Edisbury; perhaps he put it into his pocket by mistake, as he and Mr. Else were frequenters of the same Tavern.

The one about a Falcon, sent on to him by a mutual friend, was written by an Irish Bishop.

Eyton was a connection of the Edisburys, and perhaps of the lady whose virtues were called in question by the gossiping Francis.

Gevellie is a small hamlet not far from Erthig, and Anne-a-Vertch may be imagined as a wandering Healer or white witch: but she proved herself honest in the matter of the Prayer book, which is still at Erthig.

"GOOD BROTHER ANGLER,

"I had yours by Caryer and am now allmost or all together Impatient to see you heare I had yesterday A sumonds from Jurvies our old friend James who brought me A brace of Jacks, who tells me they have such sport as is not to be exprest by pen and inke and such a sort of prodigeous ones as I never heard

of I am very unwilling to goe without you therefore pray dispatch and come away I have not had one dayes fishing since you went which makes me the more desyreous of sport, Sir John is layd up of the gout, I had certainely sent you A fishe if he had drawn the river and the daye we shou'd have drag'd the river too was fixed soe the river is not yet fisht, nor doe I knowe when it will by him tho' Spring is so very favorable and the river so Cleeare that I am resolved to go som wher or tomorrow and tyre my fortune. I was once A Roach-fishing by Kingstrop water, but Could doe noe good for want of the oyle you speake of. I shall think the time very long till I see you and have your company to Jurvies. You have a somons to Mr Cob allso, and to Mr ffleet-wood's at Aldwinkle, but from too far the wayes begin to be pure good, soe I have don. Our Service to all; In hast yor's, "Ed Gardyner.

"Be sure you bring good store of snap hooks and live bait hooks un-armd, I have 200 yards of line new made, and all things else ready, I pray bring me two or three pound of that sort of pack thred they call Bedlam Thred; 'tis small and fine for making walling for A nett. I'll repay you with thanks. Pray com away.

"For Mr Else, att ye Goulden Ball in Gravill Street, near Hatton Garden, London."

"Good Brother:

"Your letter putt mee into a scruteny about your booke, being King Charles the first his Quarto, of which I tooke such spetiall care when I went for Ludlow, and doe finde that it was certanely deliver'd to one Anne Vertch David a woman of the Gevellie that frequents your house and as they here tell mee was the same woman that brought the Roman Horse leach from you, I posted One away to her this morning to bring her away im-

medately to mee, and it seems she was then going to Erthjg but my messenger questioning her of it shee confidently affirmes shee brought it to your house and that Wyatt Owen took it out of her Apron, of which you may soone satisfie yourselfe uppon further inquiry, though I find this cursiter hath noe very great opinion amongst those that know her better than I doe. I will see you made a faver if it doe not appeare to your selfe that this booke was brought and left at your house I have nothing more to add save to assure you that I am

" Your very affectionate brother and servant

" Kenrick Eyton.

" Eyton, *March the* 18*th*, 1674."

" Killala,

" *June ye* 12, 1700.

" Sr,

" 'Tis true indeed, that I promis'd to send you a falcon for my very kind friend Mr Edisbury, and was so bent upon it, that I refused both my Lord Lucas and Mr Justice Coole, who importun'd me by letters; and tould them plainly that I was engaged to serve a gentleman in Wales who had very much obliged me when a stranger and in distress; but after all, 'tis not in my power to serve him, which gives me no small concern; for the man that takes them was let down the rock two and thirty fathom by a boats cable, and found nothing but the bones and feathers of prey'd birds; this is the second time that the airy has failed in six years; but if it please God I live, I design to send him the very first I can get, and would be most heartily glad to serve him in a far greater thing.

" Your most humble servant

" W. Killala.

" When you write to Mr Edisbury, be pleased to give him and good Mrs Glegg a thousand services from me."

ANNE DAVIES *to* JOSHUA EDISBURY

"SIR,

"I am much ashamed you have had a second trouble from my cousen Eyton about trees for me, both times was without my knowledge, for it is now two months since I told him I thought I must petition you and him for your assistance to make a Coddling hedge of each side a walk we have made of about 50 yards long but you being at their Doddington I planted it with gooseberries and currans and what I could gett, but it seems he still keeps in mind the first project and since he has troubled you with it I think I must pursue it, and beg the favour of you to help me with what coddling setts you judge proper for such a purpose, and what number you can with your own convenience well spare. I must also beg leave to assure you Sir that I would not have declined owning an obligation in this or any other instance to you, to whom I have bin so often obliged; and therfore must again say it was not my intention to have addres'd you by any hand but that of Sir

"Your obliged humble servant,

"ANNE DAVIES.

"All here are humble servants to yourself and the good company with you."

It is a matter of general knowledge that Wynns in Wales, if not as common, are at least as plentiful, as blackberries. Robert Wynn's letters intended only for one eye, have neither date, address, nor superscription; but he betrays his identity by a prosaic letter about hay, where the heading is Melay '99. The writer therefore was a Wynn of Garthewin, the same family as Melay, where for many generations the eldest son bore the same Christian name. Who then was Betty? his sweetheart

doubtless, not his wife : though in biblical language he addresses her as his spouse. Not certainly Betty Delves the "coz Betty" of Edisbury's letters who married Sir Bryan Broughton and became heiress of Doddington. Conjecture would identify her with Elizabeth Glegg, who passed most of her time with her Edisbury relations.

So many damsels, mere pawns in the family game, flit noiselessly through these pages. Coz Ermine reveals herself in the Edisbury-Delves correspondence as a daughter of Hugh Delves, and little Miss is almost certainly Patty, daughter of Mrs. Martha Lloyd. All these appear in the postscripts of the letters and occasionally elsewhere, usually in connexion with some matrimonial project. How tantalizing are the glimpses of romance that find their way into these pages, for they never reach the third act! Did Betty ever escape the tyrannical control of Aunt ? Did Richard achieve his "heart's desire," or Grace find a suitable residence for Captain Phillipson and herself ? Imagination may fill in the conclusions of the veracious history ; the muse herself is mute on these important themes.

"My only Dr, Dr. Dr. Betty,

"I will not fail (God willing) to be with you next week as I promis'd, being glad to hear that my Uncle gave such an answer as you mention'd. Cozin J. Lloyd was not at home but is gone to Anglesey, and the Bearer thinks he will call in his way home, and hope if my Father will not be brought to better terms he must for shame stand to the last proposals. Indeed, my life, I long in my heart to be with you and shall think the time long ; my Father did not say much against me, yet as

little as it was (which I believe proceeded from his cross humour more than any thing else) I took it very unkind to hinder me from going to the place that he had motion'd me to, and from seeing my relation so near. The Bearer told me he did not stay dinner tho' you desired him, because the old ones were so cold, and he thinks somebody has told them storys on him, for he does not know what else can be the meaning of their indifference, knowing how cordial they used to be, he told me my life look'd well, which rejoic'd me, and I pray God continue it, and increase our love, and unite our hearts to our lives' end, that we may live to his honour and glory, with my unfeigned love and respects to my dear life, is the hearty prayer of, my dear Spouse, your most affectionate Husband's love and humble servant, till Death us do part, "ROBERT WYNNE."

"*Tuesday.*

"MY OWN AND ONLY D^RRR BETTY,

"My father and mother went from home last Sunday to wait on Sir William and to invite him here. I suppose, they are not returned yet, which makes me think they are about making an amicable End of our tedious affair which is my earnest prayer, and I have sent a letter by the bearer to John Lloyd to know whether they have stirr'd in it or no having such an opportunity and madam with him, and I am in hopes to have some answer from my Dear Spouse, if there's anything in it ; especially that my life is careful of her health which I vallue more than all the world and that my love does not fret nor vex for that is very prejudiciall to my Dear Soul now you take physick especially so, I must beg that my Dear'll moderate her passion towards Eliza the maid, for this time and I desire my love to forgive her, for my Aunt has given her such a charge that if she received any letter for my Dear to give them her else not to eat

of her bread, so the fear of loosing her place was the cause of her doing so which is a thing to be considered indeed I wonder my Aunt is so unkind after my Dear told her so much, however I beg my Dear to keep up her Dear heart not to cast your self down but trust in God and patiently wait his time, for that is the best and he never fails his owne season least by being very sollicitous we be found to limit or contrive the power of God to prefer our own policy before the wisdom of providence as if we alone were able discern what would be the best Issue of things ; so I desire my Dear life to quiet her precious heart from immoderate trouble, by the consideration of that wise providence, who disposeth of all to the best and I would have my Betty think of the sacred oath we have made to each other which ought to banish all thoughts of loosing your Robin as for my part I am far from harbouring such thoughts for tis God's usual course to disappoint and crosse us, thereby to exercise our Faith, to put an edge on to our desires and a vallue on the blessings, so I must enforce my old request that you wont prejudice your health by Vexing and fretting knowing what a condition you are in, being in a course of physick, pray my Dear life make yourselfe as easy as you can their slighting her being the occasion of your suffering which is out of my power to help but I hope my Dear knows better things than to please them so much and at so dear a rate as the loss of your precious health with my sincere love and respect to my Dear spouse entreating you to be mindful of your Dear Robin's advice make use of it which will very much oblige my Dear Spouse

" Your most affectionate husband till
death us do part

" Robert Wynn."

The Sontley Family is now extinct, the heiress of Sontley having married in 1715 one Robert Hill, but

their memory is kept alive in the names of the Old and New Sontley Farms.

Where now stands the New Sontley Farm, at a short distance and in full view of Erthig Hall, once stood a fine, old, red-brick Mansion, built round three sides of a square, the remains of which are incorporated with a dwelling house and farm buildings. A few very aged trees stand where once was the avenue; on the Erthig side the traces of the "Ha-ha" which bounded the garden can still be clearly seen, and felt too, by one who on a dark evening happens to miss the path. Here, says tradition, in John Meller's time, lived the Roberts, whose idle, dissolute, but no doubt fascinating, soldier son courted and won an elderly spinster bride; (but this is anticipating). The writer of this note is Ursula Sontley, whose home was the Old Sontley Farm beyond the outskirts of Erthig Park. She was a lady of spirit and of some humour, but she has omitted to put a date to her letter.

"Worthy Sir,

"I desier you would be plesed to speak to som one that if my name be in question at our affict they may answer for me, and I shall allow them to theare fees as is dew unto them. I cannot tell of anney unless Bosteck shewld. He prates much and I feare him as little. Not else but I tell you wee are bound to pray for all our enemies. Ould Mrs Broughton was praed for in our Church this daye, and the Colonel did weepe very much it is to be feard it will braek his hart. So God send us a mery meeting. I will not saye at the funarall.

"Your sarvant,

"Ursula Sontley.

" My harty desiers and wellwishes for my cozens formar helthe."

IV

Alas for Joshua Edisbury! His house on the Dyke had proved a very Château en Espagne, for after having no doubt dreamt of it, certainly designed it, and finally built it, it is sad to think how little enjoyment he could have had in the realization of his dream. If Joshua's lot was a hard one, even though the consequence of his own folly, that of Dr. John Edisbury is still more to be deplored. He was a more distinguished man than his brother the Squire, and had attained considerable eminence in his profession; but led away, as he himself says, (in his petition to the Lord Chancellor,) by family affection and belief in his brother, he lent for the use of the former large sums of money, the property of the Court of Chancery in which he was Master.

It is believed that he died in 1715 intestate and without heirs. Tradition adds in prison and of a broken heart.

How the tone of Joshua's correspondence changes during these last years! No more chatty letters from relations and friends, but duns, bills, bonds, frantic attempts to raise money, and more piteous still, the hopeless appeals of innocent victims involved in their master's ruin.

For more than ten years the Estate remained in the hands of trustees for the satisfaction of creditors, and after the departure of Mr. Alport, the tenant, there was an auction of furniture, except a few things in the

" Blue Closet," which salvage from the wreck may have included the Yale " Skreene," the Charles I prayer-book, the letters and documents contained in the great oak chests, and sundry kitchen utensils, once the property of that Ante Towell, whose letter, with its quaint address and signature, is the very doyen of Edisbury correspondence ;—

" to be delivered at Captain Clythe at
Gravesend
" to Captain Dobingin at Chatham
" with all sped as may be
" D.D.

" Cosein Dobingin, I remember my love unto you and to youer wife trusting in god you are in good health. But I am Verye sad therefore the causes that my ritein to you at this time is to In-treat you to repare to me as spidye as you canne.

" yower lovieng ante towell."

The relationship of Ante Towell to the Edisburys cannot be explained. The Inventory of her belongings dated 1625 is at Erthig. She left behind her " Furniture, Chayers, Lynnen, fether bed, cosshions, 44 parcels of Pewter," weighing altogether 89 lb. valued at £3 15s. Most of these articles were, it may be supposed, disposed of in the sale, others, no doubt, perished from daily use ; but some heavy pewter plates, two warming pans, two pestles and mortars, believed to have been the property of Margaret Towell of [Parish's Garden,] Southwark, remain at Erthig, keeping alive the memory of one otherwise unknown to fame.

From 1713 to 1715 the house tenant was the Rev. Thomas Holland of Bewr, Anglesey. The estate had

long been in the market, an order having been filed by the Court of Chancery for the satisfaction of creditors. Mr. John Meller, one of the principal Mortgagees, who in his position as Master in Chancery had also unusual facility for purchasing with little or no competition from outside, offered the sum of £17,000, declared to be the best. Sir John Trevor, who had three mortgages and had for some time been collecting the rents, had first to be refunded his dues, together with other creditors, Mr. Elihu Yale, Mr. William Lloyd of Halgton, Sir Thomas Hanmer of Hanmer, Mr. John Bayly, Mr. Alexander Fulford, and the executors of Mr. Joseph Dymock. Negotiations therefore dragged on till the year 1718, when Mr. John Meller entered finally into complete possession, not, however, before he had made searching enquiries as to the actual value of the house and estate.

From His Distressed Tenants

" Sir,

" With submission i make bould to aquaint you that i was ordered to have Edward pary tennement which is fifty shillings a year, which was 5 pound paid to Elixsander your carrier 15 pound to Thomas Davies your carrier for 3 yeares wagis but he served you one halfe year and you paid him that, and no more out of the 2 yeares and a halfe, and you paid him for the halfe and the rest dos remain due. Your orders was that my husband should pay of all your sarvants at the mill and that he should be paid off as soone as you could, this mony was taken up of the widow Phillips, of Wrixham, and when she dided her executors took my husband prisnor, so An Griffis came and brought me word that I should have Sontly tennement to run this mony by

and my mistris Letter to show that it was by your orders and i have the letter to show still, there was thurty mesure of malt taken up at Mr Nicols to brew for your coming donne by my mistris' orders it was at 5s and 6 pence a mesure, whch was [ ] to 3 tubs of strong bear for you, which one pipe you did bestow upon me. Will Brown of [ ] and sume was sent to you. to London, thire was neither malt nor hops paid for but we are thereafter every day and my husband to prison for the malt, but I sopose you have and count how my husband has 15 years wagis in your hand from Mr Alport sume time ago, and ten pound to Ann Griffis in malt and corn which was given her by your order and promised to alow it in the rent of the mill but never was for John William all way said that your necessity was so great that it should be alowed the next years rent but never was so to this day, there was 6 and twenty bussels of ots which was received part in Edward Paddock time and the rest in Mathue your groome time, and Mathue has a bill, and he gave me another for Edward Paddock tould him what was received in his time, and all this was never paid, but the last time i saw you Sir, you promis that we should not be ronged but when you come home you would put all strait which Sir i do take it very unkind that you shou'd offer to take this tennement from us and all this mony due and noe allowance toward them but this tennement and now you do order it to be taken from us, but dear Sir, we do humbly beg your favour for we do expect every day that my husband should be taken to prison upon this account, for Mis Nichols is very uneasy for her mony, and all our gear that we have slaved for all our life-time is in your hands, and now it is very hard with us, which is from your humble Survants

"HUGH AND REACHELL JONES."

A Dun

"London,
"*Xber* 22, 1696.

"Sir,

"Your Bond for two hundred pounds with interest payable to Mr John Sparrow, and by him assigned to me come due next Thursday, at which time I requested you would order the money to be paid in London and by your answer of the 20th. October I had noe reason to doubt your concurrence now S^r^ not hearing from the since desire to know to whom I must apply myself for the mony having extraordinary occasion I cannot any longer lett it remain abroad.

"Your humble servant

"Thomas Normandy.

"At the Whale on St. Margarett hill in Southwark."

"Southwark,
"*Xber* 31, 1698.

"I have waited long in expectation of the money remaining unpaid on the two hundred pound bond. I have of yours in my hands and about half a year since I sent you the particulars. I did think when Mr Glegg returned to London he would have brought your orders for the taking up of the Bond but upon the whole I have not received one hint from you neither any satisfaction from him. I beg you will no longer delay me but by the next let me have your resolutions then I shall be able to direct myself.

"I am

"Your humble servant

"Thomas Normandy."

From Mr. Glegg—*extract.*

" London,
" *May the 8th*, 1697.

" I went this morning to Mr. Normandy to acquaint him that you had sent a bill (for him) of 300 but that it would not be paid unless I would take a sealed banck note ; he would not believe that any tradesman would offer such payment on a bill of exchange soe to satisfy him I went to know if that was his way of paying his Bills and whether he would not pay this bill other wise, he was not up, soe we went further and called againe, but he was not then storing neather would his man call him but told us his master would be very angry, the bill was brought againe and he was sure his master would pay it no other wise and if that did not please I might send the bill doune againe for he did not vallow the bill at all soe I have hear inclossed it thinking it is too much to loose in a 100 y seal'd note not being worth more than 80 . . ."

It would not be fair to accuse Mr. Edisbury's wealthy friends of deserting him in his necessity ; he had borrowed all he could get from them, and made no attempt to repay. Still, the devotion of a humbler friend, his agent, John Williams, is very pleasant reading, and it is impossible not to wonder at the energy of the man who asks for pardon for any confusion in his hasty letter, for, as he says, " it was late when I began to write I was up this morning for Sontley after 3 of the clock and hope to be as early carrying hay tomorrow God spare me life and health." He sends woodcocks, hares, geese, butter, cheese ; country luxuries that must indeed have been welcome to his unhappy master, kept a prisoner in town. It is

impossible not to wonder what condition these things were in at the end of their long coach journey, and whether the custom of eating high game rose from necessity rather than choice. He begs to be allowed to come and see his master. "My coming," he says, "shall be no great charge to you, for I earnestly long for the happiness of seeing you even were it but to acquaint you how the neighbours are affected to you." His account of one of the periodical scarcities to which England was liable when there was no imported corn is historically interesting. "There has been great disturbance in all the markets about us for Badger bought up a great deal of corn which caused the Market to be much dearer than it would but now the Buyers are prevented for the Mob are likely to kill the buyers in our town and several places else but now the Justices have taken care to order warrant the Constables to take up any one as is suspected to buy corne to sell againe 'tis said that the Corne bought in our country was bought for Lord Powis and Lord Molyneuk who they say have transported it all to France that it is certain there was one wagon load taken at Chester going to the latter but was distributed among the poor."

John Williams borrowed money for his master, fought his battles, and went down to the "Eagles" at Wrexham (the Wynnstay Arms) to meet Mrs. Edisbury (the only allusion to the poor lady, except Elizabeth Lea's "dear Madam," in the whole correspondence). The coach, he says, did not come till Saturday, for it happened to be overthrown, which delayed them a day longer. "I was obliged to return from Eagle's Hall by reason Sir Thomas (Delves) coach stay'd at ours and upon

Saturday I went once more to Eagles Hall where I met my Mistress and came to Doddington by 7 at night blessed be God my Mistress is very well consider what a tedius journey she had, she would have writ by this post but she knew I must." John Williams in spite of his occupation as overseer of the House, the Estate, the Mines, and his own sporting taste, found time to cover at least twenty four-sided quarto sheets with a neat fine script. How Philip Yorke in a later generation would have delighted in such a steward, but the best master is not always the best served. The pathetic account of the reason why Williams left Erthig, and the dramatic description of his interview with that important dignitary, Sir John Trevor, are best given in his own words.

Extracts.

"*June 5th*, 1709.

"I am perpetually plagued by John Lloyd Henalt about the 3£ Mr. Francis borrowed of him (which money I received and gave a Receipt for, for the use of Mr Francis: but now he damns and [ ] himselfe if he will not proceed to an outlawry against me and likewise against Mr. Richard Edisbury. I hope you will be so kind as to speak to Mr. R. Edisbury that he will not suffer himself to be thus abused by him for he says of Mr. R. Edisbury that he never designes to pay anybody. It is very hard if I must suffer for what I did tho' I always thought he did it to Bully me."

"*August* 12, 1709.

"I can see here plain, here in the country for Sir John Trevor or Mr. Lloyd does design your ruine but I trust in God it does not lie in their power."

"*September 3rd*, 1709.

"As to my stay at Erthigg I was to go upon Munday next which I gave you an Account of in my last but Mr. Alport being soe kind as to write to Dodington that I might have leave to stay a weeke longer it was granted. I have acquainted Mr Glegg with my parting who was one very great cause why I did for had he ensured me as much as would have paid for my Table and my family I would not have stir'd but a reward he promis'd me nothing els and that 20 times repeated by that I judged that what service I could doe was not worth any wages that is one reason, the 2nd is that famely has been unhuman yes, I may call it unjust but will meddle no further between Barke and Tree and 3rd was I have Received some unkindnesses from them I thought I did not deserve but durst name nobody for the reason before mencioned and as for doing you any further service I shall be both redy and willing to the last breath I draw and had not I a family to maintaine, I should never have left you."

"*September* 4, 1709.

"Upon Monday last Sir J. Trevor was at Erthigg. Mr. Alport was just gon out; he came into the house and went throw into the Garden and Farm, he was come to see how things were kept (which if not in order it would lessen the vallue and to your dettrement after which he began to caticize me to some purpose) first he asked me what you designed to do, to which I answer'd I could not tell; then he asked me how I came to put up Plas Drayne; he replyed he was not so unreasonable a man as to aske me what was done before I was borne, abundant such questions he asked me with the greatest vengeance and tyrany Imaginable but to no purpose for it never stirr'd me one wit tho' God knew my heart at the same time (but forewarn'd fore armed), he only went throw this house into the best Garden and soe

into the first walk and returned the same way tho I ask'd his honour if he would be pleased to see the other Gardens (no) and when he came in I asked if he pleased to see the house (no) I also ask'd him if he would be pleased to drink anything that I had which he pleased viz. wine or Clarett (no) he came to give noe troble but just as he was going to take horse he tould me I was a jugling fellow, and that 3 times repeated and as loud as possible, but I made no maner of reply for when he asked me any questions that I either could not give him a redy answer or did not think convenient to answer I turned a deafe yere to him he went home in a great rage and very much disapointed and soe he went to the French Mills but I had delivered your messages to Betty Mathews who promised faithfully to observe it which I suppose she has for I dont find he is for allowing the Mill.

" I find by what Mr Alport says that if I be at Erthigg he will not lett him continue any longer Tennant for that Rogue Green has soe insensed him against mee that there is no dealing with him your Master of the Roles was mightily displeased at my hunting last Winter and asked how I came to hunt, I tould him I could not deny hunting whenever Mr Alport pleased, (Yes says he Mr A may hunt but Mr John Williams not) and when he went to the french Mill he saw the Beagles that are kept there he immediately ask'd whose hounds those were and Mathews answer'd Mr. Edisbury's. No, says he, they are none of Mr. Edisbury's but Mr. John Williams as he was pleas'd to call me and so charged B.M. to bring me the Begles forthwith that no tenants of his should keepe doggs for mee and since I wrote part of this letter Mr. Alport tells me that if I may have nothing to do at Erthigg that the Master of the Roles will lett him have it at 50£ otherwise not, therfore I find it to your advantage to part with me but if I doe

hire myself to Mr. Leighton it shall be with such a provision that I shall come over here when ever you have any business for me to doe otherwise it is noe bargain."

"*October* 11, 1709.

"SIR,

"I have hyer'd myself with Mr Leighton, who profer'd me £12 wages, and to be oblidged to give me £10 in cloths, I insisted on £15, but referring myself to him, said I should have it tho' his temper be not supos'd to be as agreable as some would have it, I shall have a very good Lady of Mrs Leighton, and can find noe reason to suspect but he will be the same; and Sir, it seemes Sir Thomas did not aprove of the Beagles coming to Doddington, which is noe small troble to Mr Leighton, and since they must not come to Dodington, he ordered me to meete him wth your Beagles at Loton, his own house upon fryday last, and accordingly did, and after he had viewed 'em, he sent me wth 'em to Sir Leighton, to whom he made a present of 'em, and said they were the finest Packe of Doggs he had ever seen in his life. I cannot for shame tell how hard it was for me to part with the Doggs, and believe I shall never love that Sport again."

"*October* 17*th*, 1709.

"Yours of the 4th Inst. I received which seems to impart that you are angery for my hyring myselfe with Mr. Leighton had you been soe kind as to send me word that you really did not approve of it I would have sent you I hope such answer as would have satisfied you for tho I have left Erthigg God knows it was with a hevy heart for I had no inclination to leave your service and my leaving it was more upon force than choyse (tho you were soe kind as to say I might make free with your Barn). Your letter has made me very uneasie."

" *October* 30, 1708.

" I am sorry to hear that your distresses and unkindnesses of friends doe still continue. I pray God to put a hapy end to them all which I do not all question if you have but Justice on you but I believe never was any body soe unfortunable as you have been in the people you have to deale with all. Mrs. Lloyd I thank her still continues to send me messages of a strange kind one of them was, which she sent by Grace to charge me to take care to pay the rent I could heartily wish that my care wou'd have served to pay off such a sum it should not be unpaid soe long and yesterday she sent me a chiding by Richard the Chandler from Overton. She wondered how I could be soe brutish and unkind to her that had been soe kind to me. I doe own to have received kindness from that family but not very much from her save only 2s a yeare she used to give me since I came to Erthigg the unkindness was, that you were in the Country som time agoe and takes it very ill that I had not acquainted her that she might come to see you. She sent the same message by Grace that I seem'd partly to own you had, soe and was resolved not to undeceive her."

The following is endorsed (May 26—my wife with one from J Wills)

" Yours my deare of the 18th I received; my uncle desirs his servis to you, he is well in health and his foot and legg mutch betar the inflamation has been gon a good while and all the humor is drawne off with a deale of ease the Dr hopes it will be well quickly, the parson is they say very well and goes to his father next week. Mrs Crew was buried last night about [att ?] I sopos by this your sister has made you a visit I latly heard she wass gon to London. I am glad you find still

more to lay to the Drs charge God grant you well shut of him and all other your adiversarys, the inclosed occasions my righting this post that so you may send John your answer that hee may know what to do in your business att his next going over belive his Mr and Lady will be back next week so that if you direct to Wrexham he will be sure if it when hee goos over. I hear brother H is att Chester and hope to see him heare on Munday John says your coult is the color of his dame hass more white down his face and legs not thick nor very small, hee thinks the filly will give [ ] when new coated he luks but clumsey may make a good coach mare. John says pray what is come of cosen Dick have not heard of him sence Xmass, Pray give my Love and Serviss as dew is all I have time to say that I am your ever Affectionate wife "G. E.

"*May* 26, 1711, *afternoon.*"

Innumerable are the legal documents connected with the suit of Edisbury and Meller, with his other creditors and between the brothers themselves ; time and patience would fail to decipher the crabbed legal handwriting with its peculiar abbreviations. Most fortunately, however, in the interest of posterity and more particularly in that of the Chronicle, some twenty or more years ago a certain Mr. Baker made what he himself calls an arduous, amusing hunt among the old documents in the Public Records Office. The result epitomized is as follows :

"The facts are in the form of an admission by Dr. John Edisbury — in a suit against him issued by his brother, Joshua Edisbury of Erthig. They prove out of Dr. John's own mouth that he was guilty of the misdemeanour charged against him."

The Lord Chancellor caused to be seized certain bonds (securities for money lent) which the two brothers had given to a third person, and afterwards proceeded to realize these bonds by getting hold of and selling what was probably the only property left to the two brothers, namely, Erthig. A curious point about these bonds is this, it appears that they were entirely fictitious, for from them it would be supposed that *some third person* had at Dr. John's request lent the money to Joshua while the fact was that Dr. John had lent the money himself out of a sinking fund in his possession—but wishing to conceal this from his brother (this is his own admission) he tried by this device to make out that a third person, Richard Holford, had lent it at his request. This third person denies having ever lent any such money or even being aware of the existence of the Bonds.

The opinion of the diligent searcher of the records who, as he himself says, would prefer not to leave the matter incomplete, is shortly as follows. Joshua, though he got heavily into debt by gambling and speculation, had not necessarily been guilty of any "punishable act." He might ask his brother to lend him money if he chose, and Dr. Edisbury says particularly that "he adopted a particular way of lending in order not to let his brother know at the time that he, Dr. Edisbury, was guilty of misappropriation. So that Joshua could not be said to have 'guilty knowledge' Yet I too should think" (this the searcher,) "Joshua Edisbury must have been a rogue, since the records show that the two brothers tried to do one another and the various money-lenders with

whom they had dealings." No doubt the whole story appeared in the briefs of Counsel for the opposite sides and afforded them high edification, but such papers as these have probably been destroyed a good deal more than a century ago.

Meller *v.* Edisbury

Dr Edisbury having assigned to ye particular several Bonds from his Brother Joshua ye same were put in Suit and Judgment obtained thereon for £4430. The bonds from Mr Owen not being included.

Judg. £430 19^{h} of July 1709 £4000 13^{h} Nov. 1709. The Petitioner thereupon exhibited his Bill for satisfacion out of Joshua Edisbury for discovering Incumbrancers who have all made Parties except his Honour ye Master of ye Rolls And all y^{e} Def. have answered except Sr Thomas Hanmer.

Joshua Edisbury Answer.

The Def^{t} Joshua sent forth his Estate to be £100 pr. an. Mortgages.

To his Hon^{r} ye Mas^{r} of ye Rolls			
Principal Money besides Interest			£7330.0.0
To Mr Lloyd his Brother in Law		1800	
		2100	3900.0.0
To Mr Yales ab	1707		2000.0.0
Mr Fulford ab	1707		100.0.0
Mr Bagley	1706		800.0.0
Mr Terrat	1708		100.0.0
Mr Dymock	1706		100.0.0
			£14.330.0.0

These are all that stand Prior to ye Demands in ye Petioners Bill, but Interest is unpaid on y^{e} said Judgment £14.330.0.0

To S^{r} Tho. Hanmer by Judgement in Nov. 1709 Total £600.0.0

Total Incumbrance £149.39

That ye Mast^{r} of y^{e} Rolls and Mr Lloyd have been in possession since 1705 The Acct' of J.M, as it then stood in ye Book Rec^{d} £4789.2.7 Paid 975.6.4 Rem^{r} £3813.16.2.

M^{dd} In y^{e} Acc^{t} dd so L^{d} Keeper w^{ch} is made up as between J.M and y^{e} Justices of y^{e} Court. Ye Money received out of w^{ch} they are Intitled to a Dividend amounts to no more than £3576.12.07. But in y^{e} Book of

J.M hath charged himself w^th ye Money rec^d from y^e Mast^r of ye Rolls being £1100 And if y^e same as also £112.10. is deducted as pd to Mr Edwards added to ye before-mentioned £3476.19.7 they will make up ye whole sum mentiond to be received into my book as about

	3576.12.7
	1100.00.0
	112.12.0
Total	£4780. 2.7

M^dd L^d Keeper Ordered y' Monday should be contind at Interest but it would answer 12.6 — and then to be paid out to all y^e Justices according to that proportion

Debit — £6354.19

to produce a Dividend £3971.17.1

so that y^e Debt then be reduced to £2383.2.3

The debts due from Dr Edisbury to ye Suitors of the Court as given	as given 5995.15.10½
At first to ye 2 Senior Masters Those as without Order in ye cause of Bassett *v.* Hungerford w^h ye other Creditors insist was an undue preference whereby his debt will be increased	359. 3. 6
Total debt	6354.19. 4½
By money received from Dr Edisbury	2300.00.00
recovered from Mr Owen	800.00.00
By interest of Money charge of	476.12.07
What hath been paid for Law Charges in y^e suit ag' Joshua Edisbury	101.12.07
M^oc the Money advanced by y'e Masters is not included in this Account. But ye same hath been all along kept at Interest which makes part of y^e above menion^d Itim.	3576.12.07
Remains due from Dr Edisbury	2778.06.09
By Mr Pell Report of y^e 12^h of May 1712 is due upon account to Dr Edisbury from his Brother Joshua	3430.15.00

	s. d.
An Account of ye Interest as before mencioned	
By a Years Interest to Lady Day 1710 for £1500 placed on ye Land Tax at 5 p.a.	130.00.00
and a year's Intst to 17^{h} July 1710 on 1000	
By Money rec^{d} at times from Exeter on old Debentures due to Mr Edisbury	99. 2.07
By 2 years Interest to Ladyday 1712 on 1500	
By 2 years to 17^{h} July 1712 for £1100	132.00.00
By a years Intst to 23^{d} Jan. 1711 for £300	48.00.00
	589.02.07
Paid Mr Edwards ye Sollicitor by ye L^{d} Chancellors Order	112.10.00
M^{od} £25 was omitted in ye money paid	476.12.07

Mr Edwards for y^{e} whole Money then paid was 112.10.00 per his receipt Delivered to y^{e} Lord Keeper 16^{h} October 1712. M^{dd} May 24^{h} 1743 Remains unpaid of Dr Edisbury's Debts to the Suretys' of the Court, the sum of £320.09.02

S. Yorke.

Petition of John Edisbury, Master in Chancery.

May, 1712.

To the Right Hon^{ble} Wm. L$^{d.}$ Cowper Baron of Wingham, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.

The humble Peticon of John Edisbury, Doctor of Laws and one of ye Masters of y^{e} High Court of Chancery

Sheweth that yo^{r} Peticoner with ye Utmost Shame and Sorrow, doth acknowledge his Crimes and abhor himself for his Breach of Trust, in Misapplying ye Money committed to his Charge by y^{e} Order of this Court, (So that he is unable at present to pay ye same.)

But forasmuch as yo^{r} Peticon^{r} was seduced into that guilt by affection towards his Brother, Whose Estate yo^{r} Petioner *then verily believed* to be more than sufficient to reimburse y^{e} money lent, and all other Incumbrances whatsoever.

And for that yo^{r} Petioner hath allready given all y^{e} Satisfaccion of w^{ch} he is at present capable, by delivering up and making over in truste for y^{e} Suitors of ye Court, all Bondes and securities for Moneys w^{ch} he any way had, and leaving himself nothing to depend on besides Charitie of Friends.

And since ye commitment of ye petitioner to Prison will not make any further reparacion to y^{e} Suitore of this Court but wholly disable him there

from, And may occasion his *utter Ruin* by exposing him to be charg[d] in his other debts for w[ch] he stands bound as Security for his Brother

And for as much as yo[r] Petioner if disengaged from y[e] constant Attendance and Business of his Office and allowed time for Solliciting and Applying to his Friends might w[h] their assistance be capable of raising Part of y[e] s[d] Money.

Yo[r] Petioner most humbly prays that he may be Discharged from his s[d] Office by Surrender or otherwise and that yo[r] Lordshipps Clemency may intercede w[h] yo[r] Justice on his behalf so as to move y[r] Lordshipps Compassion towards y[e] poor Petioner. . . . .

The lights are burning low, the patience of the audience exhausted, after the summing of the case of "Meller *versus* Edisbury" and but little remains save the last pathetic petition of the once prosperous and respected Master in Chancery, Dr. John. A family tradition says that there was another letter written by him from gaol, and the one here shows him to be on the very threshold of it. He had not even a sheet of paper on which to write, but scribbled his note on the back of an appeal to him. A profound obscurity envelopes the final scenes of the brothers Edisbury, but Joshua is believed to have outlived John. They must both have been intimate with Mr. John Meller, who succeeded John in his office, Joshua in his home. One indeed of Joshua's undated notes, found among Mr. Meller's papers, is signed "affectionately," a quite unusual form of signature when formality was the rule.

"*To* Dr Edisbury *These.*

"Deare Doctor,

"Nothing but Trouble and Vexation in this World. I have just now received the enclosed Subpœna from Mr. Ward. He is I feare beginning all anew with us; for God's sake help me what you can; and send for

the Attorney (Mr Mills I think his Name is) that is employ'd for me in this businesse My Lord bids me tell you he hopes you will dine with him here to-morrow if you can pray come that I may speake with you. I desire a line and pardon for this trouble. I am full of distraction but allways

" deare Doctor

" Yours most faithfully

" *November.*" " R D

Scribbled on the back in the handwriting of John Edisbury is the following :

" Good Sir,

" Pray be pleas'd to give me your answer with your first leisure. But before I give you an account of what relates to us I do protest I have forgot what occasion'd that answer of mine. I could not lye, and I cannot [re]collect what you desire of me, neither could I when I received your former letter, for my head then was and now is very disorder'd. And I have at this time the heaviest pressure upon me for being to resign my Lord will not forgive me because I owe a great sum of money this I often acquaint you with. And to the end I may make the last satisfaction I can before my office how I assign my office at Exeter after which I must bee upon charity. and so I am very well contented to do even in gaol, and I hope God will enable me to bear with patience this most just affliction, and sanctify it. to me. now in order to make the best satisfaction I can I humbly desire that you will give me a judgement upon your bond,which will secure the court that mony like Mr Yale's mony. What relates to you is about your mines, lest without [ ] from you and that you may secure them for your use I have a treasury lease by me which I found about 8 days ago, but look'd not into the date of it.

"I hope you will judge these matters fitt to be discourst of between us which if you do pray defer it not one moment, for I do expect to be sent to gaol and that in a short time, but keep this."

"To John Meller at the Wool pack against the May pole in the Strand.

"Good Sir,

"I was with Mr Marshall this morning who says my Lord goes for Kent either this evening or to-morrow morning so that our affair must rest till Wednesday the day after my Lords return in the meantime I hope wee shall meet more than once.

"I am,

"Your affectionate servant

"*Tuesday.*" "Joshua Edisbury.

"To John Meller Esq. at his house in Southampton Square.

"Sir,

"Now the coast is clear if you please to give me a line when you will be at your office morning or evening I will wait upon you who am

"Your most obliged servant

"Joshua Edisbury."

The exact date of Joshua's death and the place of his burial are unknown; he was alive in May 1716, living at The Blew Spires, Old Bayley, where he received the last of his private correspondence, a letter from his wife, scribbled on the back of a memorandum about Mines.

"This is the account Mr Martam brought from the mines when I gott him goe over as I tould you before I

did, after I had learned wheare that Mr Hutchinsons wass whome he first went to and by his directions proceeded as he relates the matter. Mr Martam's letter I have sent to Brother Harry hee desiring my Brother to send him some cloth and other things. I had a mind you shud see what concerned yourselfe, Yours my dear Sir of the 17th I have and discoursed Mr Willam relating to the matter of Sir Willam Willams and hee is very sure neither him nor Sir John W: are or will concerne themselves in renewing your sute for they both declared ageinst anything of that nature but Sir W W S will positively outbid the best bider if you can ever bring to that liberty that more may com in. Sir John Wynn will purchase no more this is all I know in the matter. I wish you may suckseed as you desire in that affaire but then if Sir John cannot be brought to account no good can be doon being none will enter a sute with him

" Sir Edward and Lady desire their servies to you, her Ladyship is prity well and all the litle ones, Neece Glegg sent me word that your nephew was gon to Bath desine'd a very short stay and thence home. I am sory you did not see him, young men forgett all but thare pleasur so time overslips them. I did not see him as he went up though went by the dore for the foresaid reson I believe, his frends keep him as long as they can. I heard latly frends att Broughton wear well. Cousin Lacon has had a feaver is now you say recovered. I hope this will find you in health as I bless God I am, with all true Love concludes this from

" Your ever affectionate wife

" E. E. 25*th May*, 1716."

" 24 *May*, 1716.

" Endorsed 25 May 1716. Mr. Gleg at the Mines, and that Sir Wm. Williams would bid for ye Estate.

" addressed to

Joshua Edisbury Esq.

" at the Blew Spires in the Old Bayley."

What then will be the verdict of posterity on the first owner of Erthig Hall ? His virtues were his own, his faults due to the corrupt society in which his lines were thrown. Peace be to his ashes. His unknown grave needs no funereal stone. The home which he builded remains for his monument, his memory still lives in the letters from his friends.

CHAPTER II

MR. JOHN MELLER

I. A self-made man : The Meller family : A duel and its consequences : Sage advice : The murderer's escape : A mourning-ring : A puritan kinsman : Pupils at the Bar : " A famous victory " : Seeking preferment : An Oxford undergraduate : Mr. Meller's steward : Valuation of Erthig Hall.

II. Troublesome relations : An unlamented death : The folly of youth : Scholars of Westminster : Undated letters : Major Roberts of Llanfair : A black sheep : A family jar : A prudent young man : The worthy rector : The Sheriff's trumpeter : From the servants' hall : Two bills of fare.

III. Genuine antiquities : Weights and measures : " The Blue Room " : English tapestry : South Sea stock : Removing a landmark : Latin quotations : Stocking the cellars : Minor poets : Steele and Addison : A political job : Shakespeare commentator : Myddelton of Chirk.

IV. Sir Philip Yorke : Hardwicke MSS. : Jacobite affairs : A Muse in curl-papers : A genteel trade : The story of a libel : Foxes and Fry : Chaplain and judge : Parson and prisoner : A quaint recipe : Sir Robert Walpole's tool : The last visitor.

I

A COMELY complacent personality is Mr. John Meller, a relation to be proud of, thought Mr. Philip Yorke, who added to the picture beneath the coat of arms

> " John Meller of Erthig
> One of the Masters of the —
> Of Chancery obit 1733 "

And in the left hand corner a quotation from Virgil's first Eclogue " (O melibœe deus) nobis hæc otia fecit,"

in graceful allusion to the fair inheritance he had handed down. This picture had a narrow escape from serious mutilation, for in Philip's pocket book appears the following entry: "the dimension in point of width to which we wish Master Meller's Picture reduced are as follows, three foot six inches and three eights—a rule for the other portraits in the Gallery: the heights of the Pannels on the Gallery being five feet six inches and five eights." Providence, in the guise perhaps of a picture restorer, intervened, the size of Mr. Meller's picture was not seriously diminished and a further entry in the same pocket book runs thus: "For dressing Mr. Meller 5.5.0."

Very vain of his new Coat of Arms was Mr. Meller: he had it emblazoned on his plate glass writing table, and preserved whether by accident or intention the bill he paid for it to Heralds' College :—

	£ s. d.
To the two Kings of Arms	30.00.00
To my Lord Marshall's Secretary for the Warrant	02.03.04
To the Register of the College of Arms	01.06.08
For painting and gilding the Patent for volume	02.00.00
For engraving the Patent	00.06.08
For the Case, Tin boxes, Strings etc.	00.05.04
For Stamps to the Patent and Two Certificates	00.03.00
For painting the Arms for the approbation	00.06.08
	36.11.08

For drawing, the Petition, certificate Warr. and Pattent
For making several Designs for the Arms and Crest in Trick and Colours
And for Time and Expenses in Soliciting it
July 15 1707 Received the full contents of this Bill

By me JOHN HARE

MR. JOHN MELLER

Mr Meller was a middle-aged man when he settled down at Erthig, and as the architect of his own fortune, the change in his addresses may be held to indicate his upward career.

The earliest of these is

"St Gyles in the fields in
London"

in 1700 it is

"At ye signe of the Wool pack
against the Maypole in the Strand
London"

and occasionally

"att his house
Moredon, Surrey."

Then, when he was no doubt busier as well as richer, the address is "His House in Southampton Square," and finally, after 1720 "His House in Bloomsbury Square."

To Erthig among the rest of his personal property, Mr. Meller caused to be conveyed many bundles of legal documents. He kept his bills too, and these and the letters make up the sum of all that is known about him. But Mr. Meller created his own memorial, for more even than Edisbury (who hardly ever lived there) his personality is impressed on Erthig Hall. His presence still dwells in the panelled chambers, amid the household gods he selected with so much taste, and which those who have come after him preserved with such care.

It is difficult to imagine the dignified lawyer as the

whining schoolboy who penned to his father the letter which blind chance has so capriciously preserved.

"*Feb.* 27, 1681.

"Most Loving and Dear Father,

"I am very sorry that I should so far incur your displeasure, as to give you so free an account of Mr Smith's incivilities towards me, As I never as yet did; but now they, grow so many and he also so altered from the man he was once that I am not able to bare them and pass them over in silence: I omit to speak of those many miscarridges he is guilty of by which he hath allmost lost the good opinion of those that live by him, for thes things do not belong to me, nor are they fitt to be reckned up at this present time; I shall onely give you an account how he abuseth his borders, whom he now disdains and declar's he can live without them: He now proceeds so far as to strike me in his mad humours (for so I think I may best call them) without the least occasion; he misuseth me so far as to call me divil and raskally rogue, and wisheth that the Divil may take his borders, and such like expressions: he hath told Mr Horn of me for things which I never did, on purpose to make Mr Horn displeas'd with me; he try's all the ways that possibly he can to make mee loose your favor than which nothing is more dearer to me, I had rather loose anything than loose that; whatsoever I do in the house or at any other time he imputes to scoffs and [jeas] though never so intended; therefore at last, not being able to bear them longer I do beg and intreat you even on my knees to [dase] him in some way or other,

"Who hath ever been and ever will be

"Your most obedient and dutifull son till Death,

"John Meller.

"I have been so troubl'd and vext to wright this letter that I had almost forgot to give thanks for the paper, paper book and orang which you sent me; I desier you to remember my duty to my mother and my love to my brother and to my sister and to my brother and sister Mynne and also to my couzin Stone being very glad of his good health."

Meller was a new man in the part of the world in which he had lately taken up his residence, his father being described as John Meller, citizen and draper of London, and of the family of Meller of Little Longstone, County Derby. The will of John Meller the elder speaks of "my son John," of three daughters, Elizabeth Mynne, Anne Yorke, and Aliza Meller, also of his grandchildren, Elizabeth, Henry, and John Yorke. The most careful researches have revealed nothing about Mrs. Mynne except that she had a daughter Frances, married to a Mr. Robert Watts, but Anne, Aliza, and the Yorke children, including Simon, born after his grandfather's death, play a prominent part in this story.

Mr. Meller of Longstone had another son, whose Christian name never occurs in the letters, but appears as "Samuel" on a tailor's bill. He was killed in a duel, in January 1692, shortly before the signing of his father's will.

October 7th, 1690.

To making yor Sonn Samuel's suite	00.12.00
6 doz : & one (water) Gilt Coat butt : (6d)	01.16.00
Stitching and Sowing Silk.	00.03.10
Fine drawing and Braed to the Cuffs.	00.01.08
Shumay lether to bind and make pockits.	00.05.06
Gold buttons and Rowls to the briches.	00.02.08

For makeing ye Blew waistcoat fac'd with Gold lace and 3 pockets.	00.07.00
6 doz. & ½ of purl'd Gold Butt : (14d).	00.07.07
Stayes and for stiffening to all.	00.01.06
Gold laces, broad & narrow. (6 yds at 6½, 6 yds at 8d)	01.16.01½
White lining to ye waistcoat body & slevies.	00.02.00½
Silk to sew ye waistcoate bands.	00.01.03
Gold thred to ye buttons holes.	00.06.10
Gall to ye suite.	00.00.06
Totall.	06.05.01

"Received this October 1690 the sume of six pounds being ye full contents of ye within written bill.

"JOHN WHARTON."

"*July*, 1690.

"SIR,

"I hev sent your bush wigg that you be spake, which I due hope will make you a meanes Sir for your pashans Praye Sir, parden my long negglect; the prise is, Sir one pound fifteen shillings, and I am shure is as moddish a wigg as if you gave 3 gineas for one and I due not queschan but it will ancer your expectashan in the weare of itt.

"These all, Sir, with my Humbull Sarvis to your gud sellfe, and I pray Sir, give my most Humbull Dutey to my gud father and Mother, and Respects to all the Rest of your gud Company. So I teak leave, Sir, your most Humbell Sarvent and honist perewigg meaker to comand

"WILL. GROVE."

The death of Samuel Meller was under aggravated circumstances, his opponent Captain Blake having been his personal friend. The outline of the tragedy is given in

the letters of Philip Yorke (father of the future Lord Chancellor) whose connection with Meller was by the marriage of Anne Meller to his brother Simon. Philip Yorke lived at Dover where the duel had taken place, and apparently spared no pains to bring the assassin to justice, but without success.

"*Fryday, February* 19, 1692, 2 *o'clock.*

"KIND SIR,

"This morning received yours, and returne you most hearty thanks, but should have been glad for some measure to have diverted you now in your solittary condition, for I very well know you to be of so kind a nature that you cannot bear the loss of a Brother without a very great Regrett, especially it being so miserable an accident. All I can at present add is one word of desire not of advice (for that I cannot pretend to) as it hath pleased God to suffer so sudden misfortune to take away your Brother's Life, no doubt to be a trouble to your whole family, I most particularly desire of you (you being pleased to admit soe free a familiarity) not to lay it to heart knowing it be by permission, and that all after thoughts and wishes are vain.

"I should have been glad to have heard Captain Blake had suffered the Law, for a higher nature, provided the murder had been (as before you) to me represented, but my sentiments in that matter I shall defer till I have the opportunity of seeing you which shall certainly bee next week, if God permitt. I am Sir, not only by this favour, but by many more oblidg'd to be for ever your

"humble servant

"WILLIAM MERYDALE."

"Dover,
"20 *February*, 1692.

"Sir and loving Cousin,

"I long since received yours in which you was pleased to communicate your thoughts to mee with reference to the sadd loss of your brother, my late Cosin, which I should have answered before this tyme and begg your pardon for soe great an omission, occasioned partly by my having some thoughts of seeing you last terme and by being lately much absent from home and in parte by waiting in expectation of seeing my brother Henry here with whom I had some desire to confer about the late parts of your letter but it hath so fallen out that he not since beene at Dover. I am sorry you have been soe disappointed in finding Blake and heartily wish you could have apprehended him, and brought him to his tryall. I remember in Michelmas terme last you told mee of some overtures had been made you for his Appearance at our next sessions, to be tryed which was soe uncertaine as not to be relyed on, because he might choose to appeare or not appeare in case of our being unprepared or prepared for the tryall, our chief witnesses are all abroad at sea, but not for any long time, except one who is kept a prisoner in France by way of reprisall, for a frenchman who is detained here as a prisoner of state, and not of warr. Its yet uncertaine whether we shall have a Sessions before next terme and as uncertaine yet whether the Witnesses will be at home, being sea faring men, but I cannot thinke Blake will appeare and offer himself to tryall after comitting soe notorious a Contempt, for which I thinke the Courts will be obliged to commit him if he should, till another Sessions rather than take his own Recognizance to appear afterwards. I have little hopes of a faire tryall here, Blake having been here too short a tyme to be known before this Misfortune, and too much opportunity afterwards by his

obsequieous and dissembling Carriage to insinuate a better opinion into people of him than he deserves, and possess them with an opinion of a too great a friendship between my Cousin and him, however if there were a certaintie of the Witnesses being at home and his appearing the next Sessions perhaps it might be the best way to trye him here, least when you have been at great Expense and trouble to secure him he should be remanded. I cannot but commend your good and charitable designe in memory of your Brother, but I must say I think the subject too lamentable to give the least occasion of solace or rejoycing even to the poor who are generally too ill inclined, and too apt to abuse the Charity of others and our towne has not soe well deserved at your hands. As to your proposall of haveing an Anniversary Service in resemblance of a ffunerall solemnity since it seemes your desire I wish a proper Season and opportunity for it, but its the sin and misery of this Age, hardly to beare such serious things and I feare the too great sense of defect of duty in some tho' too little resentment of the Crime in others and too good opinion obteyned by the Criminell even to that degree to admitt him (as I have told you) to the publicke Communion of the holy Sacrament as a true Son of the Church (a Character too often given to the most profligate persons) makes it seeme too difficult to be admitted; and some concerned in the Administration of Justice will not easily beare to be put in mind of their owne failure of Duty and may soe farr misconstrue soe good an Action through their own guilt as to thinke it designed for reflection, besides its hard here in our publicke Churches to find such a Minister as doth not either want will or ability or both to imbrace and improve such a subject as this, to the purpose you desygne it, soe that I cannot but conceive with you that if soe good matter be not duly timed and agreable to the temper of the place, of

which I am very jealous it may instedd of being useful turne to Contempt and offence ; That of laying a tombstone on the grave I leave to your owne resoluson and tho it be of no benefitt to the deceased yet is most agreable to the Custome of our Countrey ; pray excuse my great delay in writing to you. I hope all friends bee well in health to whome wee give our hearty love and service.

" I am Sir your assured loving Cozen
and Servant,
" PHILIP YORKE."

" Dover,
" 29*th of March*, 1692.

" COSIN MELLER,

" I received yours touching the Coroners Inquest after my returne from Sussex, and you may be assured that the copie I sent you agrees with the originall, tho' as I wrote you the Intent of the Jury was to finde the matter Man-Slaughter since this Pretended error of the Towne Clarke appeares, They are here a little uneasye and finde fault with him ; Our Maior and Jurates have now appointed their Sessions to be the 8th of Aprill next when I hope to see you here, and desier you to get an Indictment fully drawne, for which the Coroners Inquests copie will, I suppose, fully instruct you, if not, pray lett mee heare about it If you should not be satisfyed in the proceedings against him here on his tryall, and you finde the Evidence thereon may att all beare it, you will doe well to be provided to secure the Captain to answer your appeale where you shall finde it best to bring it, pray consult whether it bee convenient to indite the Captain's man as an Accessory hee being present, and suspected by one witnes att the least though he denyes upon his oath that he was present or knows any thinge of the affair.

" With my due respects and services to all our Relacons desiring to heare speedily from you,

" I am, Sir,

" Your very loving Kinsman to serve you,

" PHILIP YORKE."

" Dover,

" *1st April*, 1692.

" LOVING COSIN,

" I have yours on my returne just now from Canterbury, where I consulted Councillor Crayford about our proceedings against Blake, and have gotten an Indictment drawne upp, and advised about the Method of an Appeale which Sheill takes some Care about, two of our chiefe witnesses are att sea, but have been expected home some time. If they come not home before the Sessions wee must endeavour to putt off the tryall I feare, I know nothing to the contrary but that our Sessions must hold att the prefixt time, the 8th Instant, there being (proclamationed) out for the fast, and the [pro's] for it being issue'd forth. I perceive you have paid the £30 to Mr Stodden in absence of Mr Derwicke, which is as well as if paid to him. I wish you a good journey hither with respects to all relacons and friends and due service to them and to yourselfe,

" I am,

" your loving Cousin to Comand,

" PHI. YORKE."

" Dover,

" *20th April*, 1692.

" LOVING COSIN,

" I received both yours and am glad to heare of your safe arrivall home, I delayed to answer your first, endeavouring if possible I could to finde whether Blake

were come down into the Countrey soe as to have putt our officers here upon their duty, but now haveing reced the Lord Cheife Justice's Warrant, I have frighted some persons particularly the Goaler, who because he is not able to truble himselfe hath dispatched a Messenger to Faversham in Kent to enquire after the Captain his Company, haveing as I heare marched yesterday morning from Canterbury thither I have wrott to a friend there to assist and to incourage the Messenger to dilligence putt 5s in his pocket I shoud be gladd to heare of his being taken, if it happen otherwise you shall heare from mee, that you may goe in with your Habeas Corp : which as I take it must be directed, Maiori et Juratis villæ et portus Dover in Com : Kent, necnon Custodi prison Dom : nostri Regis et Reginæ ibidem ; Hee who is the head Jayle keeper is one Mr Castle who lately lived in Court Chancery Lane over to Sergeants' Inn, I have heard he belongs to the Hamper Office in the Exchequer. It may not be amiss to speak to him and hint his danger that hee may alarme his deputy here ; I will write this day to Canterbury and Sittingbourne, and desire you to write or send to Gravesend to make enquiry, and shall take care for another copie of the Inquisition. I hope all Relations and friends are well, to whome we send our due respect and Services, and am, Sir,

" Your very loving Kinsman,

" Philip Yorke."

" Cozin, " *April* 21*st*, 1692.

" The Messenger sent with the Chief Justice Warrant to Faversham after Blake on Wensday morning being returned, informes mee he marched with his Company from thence on Tuesday morning to goe for London, as is pretended I have therefore sent you the Warrant, but to againe aprehend him by. I find persons here were harboured there, they ought to be in

looking after him and too willing to putt the trouble and Charges on us. Pray enquire of Mr Crayford, who is now att London, whether he heard of him upon the road. I desiring him by my letter to enquire. My due respects and service to all Relations and friends.

"I rest in haste

"Your very loving kinsman,

"PHILIP YORKE."

"Dover,

"MR MELLER, "17 *June*, 1692.

"I received yours of today, and alsoe the Box by the Waggon and am sorry you should create soe much trouble and Charge to yourself for an occasion soe little requiring it; but much more for the death of your good ffather, of whose sicknes my Brother sent me word but I had not heard any further till your letter, I pray God to comfort and support you all under such an afflictive loss. Wee ought all, and I hope you will with patience, submitt to the Divine disposalls in all thinges, more espetially in this Case common to us with all mankinde. Sir, My Wife and selfe give our due thankes for your undeserved and exceeding favour. I thought my selfe your debtor before by receiveing more than I had expended on that sadd occasion, but I am now much more for haveing done no more than I was bound in duty to doe. I take notice of your Inclinations in reference to Blake and hope though in Charity to our Towne, (which soe little deserves it) you are pleased to moderate your sermon you will not want an opportunity to trye him hereafter or that the Justice of Heaven will overtake him that hee may not goe unpunished.

"My Brother Henry was yesterday at Dover, and thankes you for his Ring. Wee all give you our hearty loves services with all our Relations and friends hoping of your good health which wee (thanks bee to God) all

present enjoy. I feare our hopes of seeing some of your family here this summer may have been disappointed by the late sadd events but we shal be very gladd for their Company if it may be, in the mean tyme I am, Sir,

" Your obliged and loving kinsman,

" PHILIP YORKE."

JAMES SCAMADINE *to* JOHN MELLER

" For Mr John Meller At the 3 Tobacco pipes
" In S[t] Gyleses in the ffields in London.

" *June* 27, 1692.

" COUSIN JOHN MELLER,

" This is to lett you understand that I have received your letter the 21[st] of this instant. My wife did weepe very sore to hear of the departure of her frend, but having hopes in god that hee hath changed his life for a better wee are well content.

" Wee desire to be remembered unto you all and to all our frends if by occasion you see them.

" Cousin John, I desire you may bee a comfort to your Mother and so follow your fathers steps in being carefull of what the lord lent him and has left you, that so you may improve it to the glory of God in doing good as hee hath done for the good of yourself.

" And as for sister shee is not capable of giveing you thanks, but wee returne you many thanks for your good remembrance of her. I shall speak to John Clayton Tidswall Carryer that if you please you may send it by him He will be in London on or about the 7th of July he ins at the (Cosom) Inn If any occasion bee that I can bee serviceable I shall be faithfull to you, so desireing to hear from one another now and then

" I rest your loving cousin

" JAMES SCAMADINE.

" N B The ring to Mr Rendall."

WILLIAM LATHROPP *to* JOHN MELLER

"*July* 20, 1692.

"LOVING COSEN,

"Yore pen which gives me an account of your fathers Death, which I am hartely sorry to hear, but it is that which wee must all expect, and a Debt that wee must all pay, and therefore should daly prepare for it; It will bee shortly said of us wee are dead too; We should remember that we are all living Cretures and the places that know us must in a moment know us noe more, And the Company wee Injoy wee shall in a moment part with all. O let the Consideration of a Decree Determining and a providence Disposeing worke our harts to Contentment, that wee may answer our Prayers his will bee don in our daly Practises, I hope your greefe will be with such moderation that you whoe are the topmost Branch of his famely may bee as a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widdowe.

"I understand that you designe mee a Ring to bee a moniter to prepare for a Change and as a Remembrance of him who hath outstript us and gotten to the sepulcher before us, but wee like the Disciples are hasting after which shall come there next.

"If you Please upon the Receipt of these lines to send the Ring to Mr Jonathan Rendall Silkman att the 3 Pidgeons in Milk Street and will well desire him that he do put it by with some goods that he is this week to send to Mr Samuel Bradshaw mercer in Worcester it will come safe to me there with the remembrance of my kind love to you and the rest of our Relations.

"I remain Your affectionate kinsman and
servant in what you please to command
"WILLIAM LATHROPP."

"Loving Cozen,

"These com to acquaint you (that if you have not all redy heard) of the Death of my Deare and Loving wife; who departed this life tuesday the 2nd. Day of this present June about 8 in the forenoone and was interred the Fryday following; shee hath beene in a weake and langwishing Condition all winter seldom stired out of her Chamber, my great hopes beyond all the meanes used was, that warme weather might have recovered her; but now hope is at Its Jurnyes end (and shee alsoe) after a long and weary jurney, for she hath been never rightly well since she was last at London which is 10 years since (this June) soe that you may conclude shee hath undergon much (in soe long a time) but now shee is entered into her Dormatory of Rest; (where I hope shee is happy) though she hath out gon us and gotten to the Sepulcher first yet we should remember that wee are following hard after, the Lord in mercy grant us all a joyfull meeting in the morning of the Resurection.

"Shee desired that I would send you a Gynney to buy you a Ring to weare for hir sake; which I have accordingly don, by the bearer hereof whome I have desired to deliver to yor owne hands; hee is a Kinsman and neare Relation of mine; by whome I hope to heare of you and all yor famely's good helth.

"Brother Stones was soe kind I thank him, as to take the paynes to Com and paye his Last Respects to hir, and, to bee a bearer of hir to hir Long home. Shee desired mee to give him 10^{s} to buy him a Ring which accordingly I have don. In Regard yor Legacy is double to his I leave it to yor prudence either to acquaint him or not. I have no more to Add but the Remembrance of my kind love to yor selfe and wife and all yors, which is the harty desire of yor Affectionate kinsman and servant,

"Wm. Lathropp."

A striking instance of the danger of arriving at premature conclusions is to be found in the correspondence of Henry Partridge, who left some half dozen letters in microscopical script. "Dear Daddie" he begins and signs himself "your affectionate son." This letter when first discovered was regarded with shocked surprise, with uplifted eyebrows: "The less said about it the better, my dear," which was the correct attitude of the nothing-if-not-virtuous and polite society of the early Victorian era. But Meller leaves the witness box without a stain on his character, the connection was both legitimate and legal, for his "son" Henry Partridge with his "Brother Bob Buckenham" were pupils in chambers of the rising barrister.

HENRY PARTRIDGE *to* JOHN MELLER

At his house at Moredon, Surrey.

"DADDEE,

"I would not have been wanting in my Duty to have waited on you when at Mitcham but that I was engaged home with Company. The next day I waited on young Mr. Chorry to see Hampton Court and from thence to Berks to pay my respects to that Family, to discourse with old Chorry (who went down that morning,) that I might know how far he and Mr. S had gone in the Affair and what was next to be done. I find t'is in a fair way, we have agreed the value of the House, so that there remains only satisfaction as to the titles on both Sides which will be soon done when Mr. C sends his to Town and lets us know who he would have to inspect ours. I hope all will be agreed the next Week and then Dear Dad for your Assistance to compleat the Happiness of your Child, for I shall stand in great need

of it. Its no small inconvenience I ever labour under. The want of words to express myself tis the main cause that my Conversation is so rough and uncouth it often murders my meaning and runs me into Blunders upon Blunders. This is my case at my best but when thir is Concern or aw upon me 'tis ten times worse, as it is now for I am downright smitten so consequently dumb foundre'd. Its somewhat strange tho, I must be the reverse of Mankind that Love should work such contrary effects on me, yet so 'tis and I know not what to say for myself nor will think I am so lost, [ ] and again between Hope and Fear, that Despair is ready to seize me. Hope prevails awhile by reason of my hitherto success and then I am pleased but when the Thoughts come of what Tittle Tattle I must go through despair of further success thrusts in and spoiles all again. Indeed Dadd, I know not what I should do but that the remembrance of a comfortable expression of yours "If Mr. S and I agreed" and it revives me and is the greatest supporte of the sinking spirits of dear Dadd

"Your ever dutiful and obedient son

"HENRY PARTRIDGE.

"Middle Temple

"*March* 29 1700.

"Pray my love to my sisters and to sister Ben a double portion."

"DEAR DAD,

"I have had such acquaintances in my Time with the Perkinnity that I very much suspected the Villeroy News was of their raising in order to banter the truth or Greatness of the Bavarian Defeat; And so I find tis with the same Party here, setting it about that Rook had beat the French Fleet, taken, burnt and sunk the Lord knows how many of their Men of Warr but I hope it

may be thus as with the Boy in the Fable, their Jesting Wolf prove at last an earnest one. We are in great Expectation of great Matters performed by him this season but such Expectations are not the first. I wish when he comes home he may equally triumph with the Duke of Marlborough. Your son Bob of Buckenham is thro' Yours and Gods Blessing fairly well again and out of the Doctor's hands, he sends his Duty and Thanks for your good Wishes and with me wishes for your company here that we might eat grapes and Walnuts together with the country air and Divertions add to your Health. There only wants your resolve. All here give their services to you. Mine to my Sister, to the rich circuited old gentleman when seen and to all freinds.

" Your friend and servant

" Henry Partridge.

" Norwold,

" 11 *Sept.* 1704."

As the French had won every battle in which they had been engaged since 1643 no political party however venomously disposed could successfully belittle the importance of the Bavarian defeat, when Marlborough and Prince Eugene won the famous victory over the Elector of Bavaria and the French under Marshall Tallard. Blenheim is now chiefly remembered by that ungainly pile built by the Nation for the man of whom Swift justly said " He is false as Hell and ambitious as the Prince thereof." But half a century ago when locks, now grey, were gold, children were taught to repeat Southey's lines,

" *It was the English,*" *Kasper cried,*
" *That put the French to rout,*

" But what they killed each other for
" I could not well make out.
" But every body said," quoth he,
" That was a famous victory."

" Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
" And our good Prince Eugene "
" Why 'twas a very wicked thing ! "
Said little Wilhelmine.
" Nay-nay, my little girl," quoth he,
" It was a famous victory."

and fortunately for England " the jesting Wolf " did prove at last an earnest one, for in August that same year Gibraltar surrendered to the English Admiral Sir George Rooke.

" For John Meller, Esq. At his Lodgings at the sign of the Wool pack near to Maypole in ye Strand.

" I always had the same Sentiments of my friend Mr Meller ; as he speaks of himself. That he is not apt to flatter his Freinds, but upon reading His, I cou'd not but think it sounded a little that way ; but especially if he will grant that I best know myself which I think I do. I have still the same opinion of my friend's sincerity and therefore shall impute some of his Expressions to the Result of a Courtship he has lately exercised himself with, and that this Easter he enters upon the Matrimonial state if not before, for they seem finishing Touches. If I am in the right, then this comes to wish you much Joy and a long Continuance of it otherwise if you'll believe me you had better not meddle with it. If not in the right, then this is to let you know that a less courtly style would be more welcome to a Country

Freind especially to one who is less capable of making the like Return. I coud entertain You with my Exploits at fishing and such like diversions I take here in the country if such stuff be not insipid to you. If I forget not you used to talk about Fishing and Country Diversions, when you were at Morden but then you were in the country and had a River always in veiw to excite you.

"Surely what you write of freind Salkeld going out of Town and taking me on his way home, seems to me that he is gone on a Northumberland Journey. We must now no longer count him an old Man who gets Boys and Girls and from a Dorsetshire Journey can immediately begin upon one as long again. I should have been glad if you had given me as good hope of seeing You as of that Young Man. You should not need (to use a Norfolk Expression) to have doubted an hearty Wellcome. I am confident you'd find your country freinds as tight as the best You have. As I speak for One and this family, so I can for Brother Bob who was with us t'other day. He gives his service to you Mr Palmer and all friends was glad to hear from them as well,

"Your freind and servant,

"HENRY PARTRIDGE.

"Norwold,

"*April* 18, 1707."

In the year 1706 Mr. Meller was seeking preferment, a step perhaps in the direction of the Mastership in Chancery, to which he succeeded on the resignation of Dr. John Edisbury. He held this office until 1720, and sold it to his successor for £9000 with an additional fee of £1575 to the Lord Chancellor.

"Brickendonbury,
"*July* 28, 1706.

"Dear Sir,

"I see my Lord Keeper on fryday, I spoke to him about you; I told him I thought you very capable of the Place; he told me there had been some Persons about it, but that my recommendation should have a great influence upon him; but that he should not be in hast in the disposal of it. He went to London yesterday morning and I beleive will be in the country again the beginning of this week when I hope I shall likewise see you here. I asked Sir William Cooper if he have the value of the Place he told me my Lord had been proferd fiveteen hundred pound: My Lord asked me what standing you were off; I told him I thought about 10 years at the Barr, if more the better. I told my Lord that I desir'd it upon no other terms than he would bestow it upon another, that if his Lordship would accept of you; you would give as much as another. If you have an opportunity of giving your letter to my Lord it will not be amiss. If you should give Baker a guinney I believe he would be more Industrious to acquaint my Lord. I desire that some Person that is acquainted with my Lord may give a Character of you to him besides my self, so bring some such letter with you. If a Lawyer the better. I wish you good health in all my heart and I would have you stand for a hundred pounds. I sent this today because the Post would make you lose time.

"My humble service to Miss Meller and my sisters

"I dont know if I gave to my Lord Keeper the title of right Honarable if not I desire you to make it right

"I am,
"Your servant to command,
"Thomas Clark."

An anxious mother is the writer of the note, which, short as it is, conjures up a vivid picture of 'Varsity life. A private tutor, two liveried servants, and horses for the whole party—such was the equipment of a young gentleman of fashion in A.D. 1718.

"*June* 30 *of* 1718.

"MR. MELER,

"I was sory I did not take an opertunity to Wait on you before I left London, about my son's maintenance I was willing to know wather my brother and Cosen Tryon would give thar Consens to have it increased thay seem to be willing to have it advanced three hundred pound a year more. I cannot pretend to keep him at Oxford the way he is in of five hundred pounds a year. his tutor hath 100 pounds p annum besides a hors keeping his Washing and fireing my son hath tow livery Sarvans and horses which he cannot be with out. Doctor Ratclif desired I might alwayes keep for him his own pocket expences one hundred pound a year I am willing to do anything to make him ease at Oxford that is reasonable but will not incourage hom in any Extravagancys. I should think my Self infinitely obliged to you if you wod. put me in the way to make Every thing Easey to all parties without going to the Court of Chancery. I beg you will give me your advice in this affaire if you pleas to derect for me at Bullick to be left with the Post master of Stamford in Lincolnshire I beg my humble servis to your sister who I hope is well

"I am Sir

"Your obliged humble Sarvant

"JANE TRYON."

A pity indeed that the reader of these published letters will never enjoy the fascination of the original

scripts. As the Author pens these lines, many miles away from the letters themselves, the varied handwritings stand out in the mind's eye, associated each one with a particular person, and having a character and individuality of its own. But handwriting, if it reveal character, is no test of ability or good breeding, for distinguished men, refined women, often write illiterate hands. Edisbury's steward wrote an admirable letter, his master an untidy scrawl. A general improvement marks the change from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century correspondence, a change due partly perhaps to the correspondents, for Edisbury's friends were chiefly the Welsh and Cheshire Squires, while those of John Meller were business men from Town.

This digression on handwriting attaches itself without any particular reason to a letter written by Mr. Meller's steward to the first Mr. Simon Yorke. This said steward being a faithful servant was disliked in consequence by many of the tenants. He is a frequent correspondent, but generally on dull subjects such as mines.

"Good Mr York,

"I doe not writ this without blushing and humbly Pray your Pardon Ten thousand times for being silent so long, haveing Received your three severall letters; wee were here for som time in Pene for my Master and all of you, occasion'd by a report given out here you were all Robed befor you gott to London, till I received a line or too from Mr Whit which brought the welcom news that you were all safely Arrived. at london: and in good health, which all my master's friends received with a great deale of joye. my wife and self are very glad the Canisters were found; my wife tels me they were Pack'd

up that morning before she came to Erthig. Mr Paine offers to Impose upon my Master in demanding three half pence a pound for the carriag of those goods which was sent from Erthig befor he left the Country, I bargained for a peny, and have it under their Clark's hand to show. I'le either send it up or if my master pleases Pay here. Mr Smith I Spooke with here last Thursday and tould him of the mistake in the weight. he says it was entered here after the long hundred, and not alowed of in London. and besids that he took in a box of Mrs betty's at Whitchurch that waid above twenty pounds, he tould me one of my master's Servents saw all the goods weighed and that he desires a peny a pound carriage; if my master will give me leave I'le pay here, Sir, I have observed your commands to Madam Sallusbury and all that family who Return you their humble servvis with a great Many thanks for the trouble you had, and desire the same to my Master and Madam Meller. Good Sir, my wiffe beggs one favour from you, she has sent last thursday by Mr Smith, Carrier, a couppel of geese directed for you, carriage paid; that you'l please to Make them and her servis acceptable to good Madam Meller, and that shee humbly prays her acceptance of 'em with our duty and thanks to her for all favours. Smith will be at the Castle and Falkon on friday or saturday next, they are Put up in a little box, I hope he'l send 'em to my Master's without giveing you the trouble of sending for 'em. I have nothing more to add by This but humbly beg to subscribe myself, deare Sir,

" Your much obliged servant to command,
whilst I am,
" Richard Jones.

" Sir Please to give my servis to Mr Whit with my hearty thanks to him for his kind letter, and also to my

friend Joseph with thanks to him for his kind present which came to me safe.

" *Nov* 24 1717 "

Very tedious and incomprehensible to those not immediately concerned is a lengthy document which begins thus " This comes to give you a further Account of the further execution of his honour's Court," this being in fact the Commission of enquiry into the value of the Erthig estate. Several expert witnesses were called who testified to the condition of the " Coleworks," the produce of the Farms, the Timber, the Rents, and the exact survey and measurement of the whole.

" The next was one John Prince, a Carpenter who had been a workman under Mr Edisbury att his house att Erthig and elsewhere Above 24 years and saith that Erthigg Hall was built about 30 Years Agoe, and saith that Since the Same was built he had made some Alteracions and Amendements in the roofe of the saide Hall and done other necessarye in the Said Hall, and out buildings thereunto belonging by means whereof he came frequently ther, and well knoweth the Said Hall and that the same Containes Eight roomes on a floor besides Closetts and that the roomes on the first and second ffloores are all well scotted and one room fineered and floored with wallnutt tree and that all the harthes and chimneys are curiously fitted some with Marble and others with freestone and that the house is the best fitted up of any house in that County and saith that the house as it is with Out houses Gardens and Walls thereto belonging were never built and finished as they now are for less than the sum of £8000 and saith the Hall and Out houses are in good repair.

" *Oct. 2nd*, 1715."

"*To* John Meller Esq.

"Honoured Sir,

"I have been ill and very much out of order or I wuold have viewed Erthig Estate sooner. I hope this will please you now it comes. If there be any other particulars that you desire to be satisfyed in bee pleased to lett know. You may if there be occasion directe for me att Llangedwyn Salop post Oswestry bag. and you may be assured of All the Service that Can in any Respects be done by me for you. The Country will not yett believe but that Sir John Trevor will have the Estate. Indeed I wish to see you once at Erthig. I am sure you would be pleased with it. The value that I have Putt on the Timber, it with least I would Err of that side rather than the other And truly the Estate in every other Particular may be worth more than I have represented itt at.

"I am, honoured Sir,

"Your very humble Servant

"John Humffreys.

"Llangedwyn,

"15 *June* 1716."

II

Mr. Meller's relations were as troublesome and impecunious as those of Mr. Edisbury and not nearly so amusing. There is his brother-in-law, Simon Yorke, who, failing to make a living as a wholesale grocer, was at one time confined in a debtor's prison; also Anne, Simon's wife, with her querulous complaints, and cypher notes in which her husband's initials lie concealed. Three children had this ill assorted pair; Henry the eldest died young, Simon, the last born, prospered in all he undertook, but John was shipped off by his exasperated relations to join "The Lost Legion"—those who fall

by the wayside and none weep over their unknown graves.

MR. MELLER *from* ANNE YORKE

"*June* 16, 1705.

"LOVING BROTHER,

"I have sent you a bill of the mony I have laid out, which I had for the plate. I beleive Mr York will be houskeeper himself he hath made me disbust so much mony, but saith nothing to me of his desine, he sends in meat, butter and Chees, Candles and smal beer and coals, and what is had at the Chandler and the hearb shop he pays for, and washing, which I sopose is to opraid me hereafter, he sending in so plentifull of meat, butter and chees, as for the meat we are not able to eat it although we eat 2 or 3 days of a joint, and as for the butter if we do not eat it it must go into the [ ], in a hous you may be sensable there is more than bare eating which is laid out, witness my bill i send you herein inclosed. I am as nobody in the hous, for I see myself wasted and dare not spake, for servants seeing how Mr York dele with me it makes them take advantage against me, so that I am forst to comply with them, or els they are for giving me warning, which occasions me a great dele of trouble. If it pleas God to keep our family in health I shall not have occasion for much mony, for I am content myself in a small matter in cloth, although very bear att this time having had so much charges otherwas. I have not aquainted My Mother with any of my trouble being not willing to make her uneasy in her old age. I have made even with her for the £10 you know of I hope Mr York will be better condition when he hath made an end with Mrs Swensted in the mene time I shall sell the salt-sellar for there is no reason I should spend what I have, and go without necessary. I sopose he thinks I am to take care of his daughter, or

els he would not be so unmindful of her, and he is not allowing her what a servant expect. I desire the bill I send you may be kept [the bill is still there] that if I die befor him he may have an account of the money I laid out which I had of the plate which come to 9 poundes 4 shillings and 9 pence. I am not willing to let Betty York know of the Bill or of this letter for I believe I have let her know too much for her health being not fit to hear much beeing of so weakly a constitution. I know you will advise me to spake to Mr York, but it signifies nothing for we are very quiet though not sosably (sociably)

"Your loving sister

"A. Y."

"*Feb.* 26, 1706.

"Loving Brother,

"Upon the Consideration of a Fault that hath been made by my son Henry and the Reflection, I hear from his Father for it, hath put me on contriving how to remedy It. My son thinks, he shall have liberty to go down to Deale which then he may have an opportunity of seeing his Unkle. I have ordered my Son to wait on you tomorrow to advise about it. By a word I hear from my husband I find there is interest making of the other Hand and knowing what was design'd am very Loath should be lost. For the want of a good Management. This is all at present from

"Your loving Sister,

"Anne Yorke."

Henry Yorke *to his uncle* Mr. Meller

"London, Aldergate,

"*March* 7, 1706.

"Honoured Sir,

"On my return to London I was to wait on you butt finding you not att home therefore I write to

acquaint you I was verry kindly received att my Unkle Henry and Likewise at Dover which makes me to think itt is Convenient I should write to return thanks to my Unkle Henry but fearing I could not writt it so suitable as I ought to Do begging the favour of you to dictate a letter and send it to my Master for your most obedient nephew and humble servant,

"HENRY YORKE."

Draft of MR. MELLER'S *letter to his brother-in-law* SIMON YORKE

"28*th December*, 1708.

"BROTHER YORKE,

"You must have known long since what way is the custom of the Queens Bench, and therefore if there was a necessity for the Money you should have applyed to your own relations and provided in time for it. For my part I find Money scarce enough with all my outgoings. I will endeaver to raise £50 if any end can be made of your matters, but more I cannot do, and shall find it difficult to spare that Sume. As to the Ten Guineas you mencon I can no wise spare them without doing Injury to my other affairs. If you had consulted with me formerly and given me a true account of Your affairs, without drawing me in so hastily to be bound for you, I might now have been in a better condicion to assist you. I write not this to reflect on you, but to assure you if it were more in my power I should not be backward in Will

"and that I am your loving Brother

"JOHN MELLER."

Simon lived on a dozen years longer. His death is thus announced by his son.

"*August 26th*, 1720.

"Honoured Sir,

"I have sent away my Things by the Carrier Yesterday morning and was in hopes I should have followed them as tomorrow in the Place I had taken; but the Death of my Father will oblige me to put off my Journy till Monday next: he died last night about 7 and was sensible to the last. My Mother and Sister and Self received the Sacrement with him about two hours before his departure. Poor man he was unhappy on many accounts but chiefly so in falling under the Displeasure of the best Friend that ever any family met with.

"Your most Dutiful Nephew
"Simon Yorke."

The ends of the Earth were our portion
The Ocean at large was our share
There was never a skirmish to windward
But the leaderless legion was there.

There is something very pitiful in the thought of young John Yorke, evidently not vicious, but lacking in character, who sets down in his beautiful clerkly hand the tale of his "Extravagancy": the books (such dreary ones !) on which he squandered his small salary, and the loan to his prodigal father of "Beveridge's Thoughts on Religion." Even as he is writing the anchor is weighed, the sails unfurled, and, as their white wings dip beneath ocean's rim, John Yorke also vanishes to reappear no more.

JOHN YORKE *to his uncle* MR. MELLER

"*June* 19, 1711.

"HONOURED SIR,

"Should I go about to justify any of my preceeding actions it would be aggravating my Offence, and make me appear impudent as well as extravagant, but I presume you will not take it amiss if I endeavour to show that some of my past Follies are not quite so heinous as they may appear at the first view.

"Considering the Circumstances of the Family there can be no excuse for any expense save what is purely necessary but (I humble hope) as there are degrees of Extravagancy, those may the easyer merit pardon, as appear the least Criminall.

"When I came first into the Office it was nearly a year and a half before I received any Salary, and thinking it to be my Interest to get acquainted with some of the Senior Clerks, which I could not propose by others means than treating 'em now and then with a Glass of Wine, and my Father never allowing me money sufficient for reasonable expenses, and ashamed to let the Office know my Circumstances, in that particular, was the first Occasion of my borrowing and by that means first began to run myself into extravagancy. After I came to receive Salary, it was my unhappiness to have it in my own possession and being some little matter in debt before which I clear'd, and unwilling to let my Friends know till I had made it up again, which I could find no Oppertunity of doing, the Money slipt away Insencesibly between necessaryes and trifling Expenses. I cannot but confess I have been too guilty of Extravagant Expenses relating to Eating and Drinking but so far from spending all my Money that way, that I steadfastly believe could the whole Sum be exactly known in the five years that

I have been in the Office it would not amount to much above 10 or 11 pounds.

"The chiefest of my Extravagancy has been in Books (a Catalogue of which I have sent inclosed) Wearing Apparel, lending of Money, whereof I have two Notes under the hand of Mr Baker for 1 : 17 : 6 which he promises to discharge when he returns out of the Country in about 2 months time.

"As I have been a Sufferer by this Folly, I have gained so much prudence and caution that I hope never to be deceivd for the Future.

"I was formerly too much addicted to the Seeing plays, and run out considerably that way, but I have been very sencesible of this error, for above this two Years past that I have wholly brought myself from following that great piece of Extravagancy.

"I have laid out since I have been at the Office, upwards of 30s in Flutes, besides now and then a gratification to the Gentleman that taught me as also a Guinea on a silver Snuff Box and other smaller Expenses on such needless superfluityes.

"I might add it has been no little matter out of my way to be in Debt, by reason I have been often forced to borrow Money of one Person to discharge another, and by that means obliged to grant a reasonable satisfaction to both.

"Thus Sir, I have laid open the truth of my Extravagancy and desire you will please to pardon the trouble I have given you in persuing it. To think you will wholly forgive it is more than I can reasonably expect, and know no way to treat for your Pardon, but a due regard to my future actions, and to demean myself after such a manner that I may truly Subscribe myself,

"Your most dutiful nephew and
obedient servant
"J. Y."

" *Thursday Evening.*

" Honoured Sir,

" I am utterly at a loss how to behave myself under my present Circumstances, and dare hardly presume to Vindicate my self, lest you should think it an aggravation of my Offence.

" I am very sensible that when a person has once forfeited his Word, there is no great regard to be had to his Protestations, therfore shall only add that the Account I gave you, is true in Every respect to the best of my Knowledge. I cant Express my sorrow in having disobliged the best Friend I had in the world and should think nothing too much to regain that Favour. I have so greatly abusd but I humbly hope my Youth and the Unexperienced Deceits of the World (till of late) will in some measure mitigate the Faults that have been committed by

" Your most humble servant,

" J. Y.

" P.S. My brother Symon is able to satisfye you near the time when I purchased any Books, for he is usd every Quarter to enquire particularly what New ones I had Bought,

" 1 Volume of Collier's Essays, and of Dr Sherlock or Judgement, I have lent out one the volume of Tatler is in the hands of my Cosen Watts and Beveridge Thoughts on Religion my Father has borrow'd."

" *To* John Meller, Esq. at Mr Bridges a Woolen drape over against the May Pole in the Strand.

" Sandwich,

" *March* 21, 1717.

" Honoured Sir,

" The Ship being Arrived and just upon leavir England I thought it my Incumbent Duty to returi

you my most Humble and Hearty Thanks for the many Great Kindnesses I have ever receiv'd from You particularly this last which consern'd me. I should have paid my Respects to You Sooner, but was fearful least some accident should have Prevented my Undertaking and so have incurred your lasting displeasure. I have (Worthy Sir) one favour to Beg of You, and that is You would Please to Pardon and Forget the Errors of a Young Man ; that has seen the Folly of his Ways, and who as He goes so far Distant to make his Fortune which must Intirely depend on his own Forecast and good Behaviour he may not leave his Native country with the Resentments of his Greatest Benefactor. I once more humbly beg (Honoured Sir) that You would Please to give me leave to subscribe myself your obliged and for the Future

" Ever obedient nephew and Dutifull
servant,
" John Yorke."

Even before the unlamented death of the elder Simon, Anne Yorke made her home in Bloomsbury Square with her daughter Elizabeth and a little grandson. Elizabeth also was a widow, her husband (Jeremiah Lawry, Apothecary of London) is merely a name. Anne and Elizabeth were frequent correspondents, their dreary letters being chiefly concerned with details of their own and each other's bad health ; but Anne at any rate lived to a great age. Her strictures on the manners and morals of the Westminster boys must be taken with reservation; it is easy to imagine how the two women fussed over " their child " who in the near future was to become a creditable member of that ancient foundation.

ANNE YORKE *to* MR. MELLER

"DEAR BROTHER, "*July* 25, 1723.

"I know not how to Apologize for my neglect, writing is so disagreable thing to me; having so great disorder on me, which makes Life an uncomfortable thing. I cant say but my indisposition is allayed with great Comfort for which I must not forget to return you many thanks for all your kindness to me, I have also y^e^ great satisfaction of our Child growing up, I hope to be a Joy to the Family. Should I give just Character of him perhaps you may think me partial, therfore shall only saye that he is pieously good, loving and obliging to all, delights in his larning and gains the love of them that know him, unless the Westminster boys who spite him very much. My daughter had a design to put him in the Westminster School this quarter, but hath been discouraged from it as yet, till the next Spring. We are satisfied he doth improve in his Larning where he is, and hath been examined by them that can give a good Judgement. I dont doubt but when he is a little older he will have more courage to withstand the bad vices of that school, it is confest a School of great Larning and of as great wickeness amongst the Scholars and they need have a great deal of Grace to withstand these temptations then which have been brought up virtuesly have by their bad company drawn away. I would say much more but that I fear I have already tired your Patience. This with my hearty love and service, with my Daughter and Jackeys humble Duty to you, the same to the Major and sister, I shall conclude,

"Your loving and affectionate Sister,

"ANNE YORKE."

Aliza was even more unfortunate than her sister, she married an idle, plausible, good-for-nothing scamp,

Major David Roberts of Llanfair. It was her husband's misconduct which occasioned the quarrel with her nephew Simon, with whom and with her other relations she had always before been on excellent terms. She gives an amusing account of her journey to town and the riots then taking place at Bath, but omitted unfortunately to date the letter. Major Roberts's correspondence is typical of the man—full of protests and vain promises never to be fulfilled; and prudent Simon would have no money dealings with either of them. Aliza was probably a good bit over thirty when she took the fatal step, and her husband survived her many years. The two spent the early days of their married life at Erthig, where the Major left behind him a packet of torn and tattered letters, including a pathetic little note from which the signature has been torn away.

Aliza's invitation, though without address, was written most likely from her Brother's Town house in Bloomsbury Square.

"Loving Sister,

"As I remember some time since you was saying to me you wanted to eat some Venison, my Brother has had some sent him, and upon my telling him you Loved it, desires you and cousin Watts will come and dine with us tomorrow if you chuse Roast Venison or a Saturday if you chuse Baked. Pray tell Robert which day you will come.

"I am your Loving sister

"Aliza Meller."

ALIZA MELLER *to* MR. J. MELLER

" *Saterday, October* 15.

" DEAR BROTHER,

" I hope to receive a Letter from you Munday Post ; and after that I desire you will not write, for a Lett[r] writ on Tuesday will not come to me before I leave Bath ; which I design shall be Thursday Morning next, and hope to find you well on the Saturday night following. I desire you'll give yourself no trouble to meet me, for it will be very uncertain our coming into Town, and in Piccadilly I design to take a Hackney and come home.

" The Road, I hear, are very bad, we had a Waginor kill'd yesterday within five miles of the Bath by the Waggon falling upon him. To Day there was five Coaches went up under a Guard with Gentlemen to be examin'd. One of the gentlemen, Captain Landsed went from our House. There was always one soldier— [ ] think he had two

" The rest of the Gentlemen were in a House together under a strong Guard and the People here has condemed 6 of the Gentlemen to be hang'd and damm Sir Will Wyndham now as much as they before adored him.

" We have had a great escape at Bath a few hours more had put us in the utmost confusion but the extraordinary March of the Soldiers prevented it, if they had stay'd while Night I fear the Gates had been shut against them and they must have forc'd their Way, for I hear there was large numbers of Men making to the Bath that turn'd home when they had news of the Guards having got possession. There's a great Searching round us for some Miles and several Arms and Powder found. We are going to have a camp at Landsdowne about a Mile from Bath. I sent a Letter to Cosen Watts last Week to invite him to Dinner tomorrow sennight. I desire

you'll invite Sister Yorke and the rest with little Jacky Lawry for I shall be glad to see our Relations again after so long an absence and I believe I shall be so much tyrred as not to go out that day. There will come a Trunk sometime the latter end of the Week, directed for you. Mr Smyth must pay only the Porter from Holbourn Bridge, the rest I pay here : I fear I shall not find time to write to you again before I see you but if anything should happen to prevent my Coming, you shall have a letter immediately. I Received Symon's letter today. Pray give my love to him and thank him for it, and the rest of the Relations.

" I fear you are not very well by your avoiding writting but remembering how you used to do when you had Business I will not indulge that Melancholy thought.

" I dont hear when the Master of the Roles comes to Town. His daughter has not been once in Publick but at Church and has lived here just as at London

" I am your very loving sister,

" A. Meller."

Major Roberts *to his wife*

" *Aug.* 9, 1728.

" My Dear,

" My affairs are such that I must go abroad before I can be easy, or have the assistance of freinds I propose settling three hundred pound a year upon you and likewise desire you'l take the rest in trust for me to be return'd or pay'd by my Orders, I shall likewise give you of all power of disposing of timber to clear debts of which I'll give you a list. I hope Mr Meller will befreind me in putting these things in a right method that the county may not know how things are.

" Yr affectionate

" David Roberts."

"I doe assure my Dear cosen Roberts its noe troble but a great deal of pleasure to me to hear from you and the oftener you'd do me the favour of a letter the more I am obliged to you. I am glad you are well but much concerned to finde you have fix'd your resolutions soe as to leave us, it has affected me so much that I can scarce hold my pen, although you had apprised me of it Long ago I now beleive that what I fear'd will come true, that is that I shaent live to see you again but doe sincerely wish that you may return into your own country safe and well and that you may live to outshine the greatest in it, I pray God send you health and happyness where ever you goe and my ownely request to you is that you will take a pertekler care of yourself and let me hear from you wherever you be and as often as you can, I am sorry there is no better company to divert you the time you doe stay at Bath and wish you allways had them about you that would be most agreable to you. Cosen Roger — wrote to you by last post, the old Gent told me he desines for London very soon and that he is resolved to be marry'd. I wish he would and then I hope he would be more patient for he is very cross now, he teasis me soe much that I almost haet to see him come hear. My Aunt and he has had a battle about you and she told him of Mrs Coal and of all — I'll tell you more. My Aunt and self drink your health every day. She desires her service to you, be pleased to accept of mine and believe me to be . . . . . .

"*Sunday, Jan. 21st, 1729.*"

"Dear Sir,

"When I see Mr Johnson he informed me of a letter he had wrote to you on my behalf. I know he did it out of friendship to me, but had I known of it he should not have troubled you, nor had I consider'd wou'd I with my last but hope you'l be so good as to excuse them,

and assuring you I will never write or doe anything thats disagreable to you, I depend upon forgiveness from your goodness. I can't help looking upon myself as one of the most miserable having so many enemies gaping dayly for my destruction. I own it's what I brought upon myself and was I to begin again my actions would be quite different. I shall never offend more by impertinence. I wish all health and happiness to attend you and it will always be a pleasure to me to hear of your welfare.

" Your most affectionate Brother and
very Humble Servant
" David Roberts."

" Dear Sir, " *March* 24, 1729–30.

" Keep Jones as honest to me as you can.

" I was in hopes of a letter from you with an account of your health which no one wishes more than I. Mrs. Roberts has been ill, but is now quite recovered. I find I shall not get my thousand pound from my father without Law which I am determined upon, I really dont know how to turn myself but will think of something or other. I beg the favour of you to send Mr Robinson, the receipts you have about Vaughns affair and let him know they are originals. I am sure if I was but once easy I could turn myself to anything. Mrs Roberts joins me in love and begs service to you

" Your most obliged humble serv[t] and
affectionate Brother
" David Roberts."

Simon Yorke *to* Mr Meller

" London,
" Honoured Sir, " *May 3rd*, 1729.

" Mr Moore did not call upon me according to his Promise; I have sent to him again and in case he

do not come the next week I should be glad to know whether you would have any Course taken with him. I think that I acquainted you before that he owes a years rent to Lady-Day last. The Major desired me to ask Mr Hoares people whether they gave out Bills of Credit to supply persons intending for Paris; I accordingly made that Enquiry and sent the Major word that they would do it for particular Persons; upon their having the Sume for which such bills of credit were to be granted. This tho' so very reasonable did not satisfie the Major, who the next day sent me the following Letter.

"'Dear Sir,

"'I had the favour of yours Yesterday and am satisfied that Mr Hoare upon your application will give me a letter of Credit. I beg you'l apply to him; if it was but for One or two Hundred and Mrs Roberts will undertake the paying of it immediately out of the country. Let me hear from you Wednesday morning.

"'Your very humble servant

"'David Roberts.'

"To the forgoeing letter I sent him the following answer.

"'Dear Sir,

"'My Interest with Mr Hoare is not what you imagine it to be; and I persuade myself that when You consider my—Situation, You will not desire me to make use of my Uncle's name without his knowledge, upon such an Occasion. I acquainted you in my former that they did not give Bills of Credit, but as a favour, even tho' the Money was first lodg'd in their hands so that to make the Application you desire would be to subject myself to certain Denyall, and as

I apprehend put them upon refusing the first favour I asked of them.

" ' I am your affectionate and very
humble servant

" ' S. Y.'

" *Thursday noon.*

" I have taken the Liberty to send you, what passed upon this Occasion ; Least at any time hereafter I may be represented as having failed in point of Civility to the Major.

" I am your most Dutiful Nephew

" Simon Yorke."

Extract from a letter from Simon Yorke *to his uncle*

" I am sorry that I must enlarge this letter about a Matter relating to myself, and which hath indeed occasioned me no small uneasiness ; but since my Aunt hath threatened to my Mother That she would do my Business with You (as she pleas'd to phrase it) I think myselfe obliged to lay before You the grounds for this great Resentment together with what passed between us ; About a Fortnight ago my Aunt sent to me for 10 guineas which I immediately carried to her ; and Yesterday my Mother told me that my Aunt had been with her and desired her to speak to me for more Money ; with out menconing particularly what the sume was that she wanted : upon which I writt my Aunt the following Letter, which by her Answer will appear to be the cause of her Anger.

" ' Honoured Madam,

" ' My Mother informes me that you have occasion for a further sume of Money. If my Ability were answerable to my reall Intentions to serve You

there should not be any Occasion to apply to my Uncle, but as the case stands I think it absolutely necessary: I have already advanced as much as I can well spare of my own (if there be anything that I have properly to call so) and as to what I have of my Uncle's I ought to have his Orders. If it be your Pleasure I will write by the Morrow's Post. Please to signifie your directions to

" ' Your dutiful Nephew,

" ' S. Y.

" ' 7 *June*, 1729.'

" About 11 of the Clock last Night I received the following letter by way of Answer.

" ' Mr Yorke,

" ' When I came home I found a letter from You (indeed a very surprising one) but since you are so hard laced I have thought of another Way which you might have done; had not my Credit been soe low in Your Opinion. Be that as it will, I am sure Your Uncle wou'd not let me want Necessary's if he was sure to loose 20 or 30 Guineas by my Dying, for otherwise You can't be ignorant my Pin Money would have enabled me to have repaid it again. I would not give You the trouble of going to Mr Travers with my Service (but that I dont think it proper for me to go) and desire him to advance me 10 Guineas and I will take care to pay Mr Travers his Brother as soon as I go down to Wales and if he's in his Aires too, I have left a gold Equipage for a pledge till I can pay this great debt that I have contracted.

" ' Your humble Servant

" ' A. R.'

" To the foregoing I this morning sent the following Answer.

" ' Honoured Madam,

" ' Your letter was delivered me last Night as I was going to Bed. The angry Temper You appeared to be in at the time of writing it, made me choose to defer sending an Answer till this Morning. As nothing was further from my Thoughts, than giving the least occasion for writing such a Letter. I must earnestly intreat You to Consider the Case as it appeared to me : My Mother told me that You had Occasion for more Money ; but no sume in particular was menconed ; so that the sume might have been 100 as well as 10 guineas, for anything I know : Now I hope that when my answer is considered, free from Passion you will readily acquit me from any failure in point of respect or Duty which shall ever be preserved by

" Your obedient nephew,

" ' S. Y.'

" I had not troubled you with this Account if the Message I received from Mill Bank after sending the fore-going ; had not made it necessary for me to send you the whole of the business. I am apt to think that this hath been working up since the time I refused to apply to Mr Hoare to advance Money for the Major. If in the foregoing I have acted amiss I am certain it was not intentionally.

" I am

" Your most dutiful nephew

" Simon Yorke.

" *June* 4, 1729."

" Dear Sir,

" Not having the pleasure of a letter from you, occasions the trouble of this to assure you that I have the most gratefull sense of the many favours received from you and hope you'll always continue your friendship to me, and I shall study to guide my actions so as to deserve.

" Sir you see what usage I receive, from them whom nature, and every thing thats tender would prompt to behave otherwise. As Dear Mrs Roberts has taken the trouble upon her, to settle my affairs I hope you'll be so good as to give her your assistance. Was it not to see you and Mrs Roberts, I never would see the ungrateful country more but when a father is the occasion how can I blame others but I shall behave differently to what I have, to the Gentry of the Country. I have put the powers in my wife's hands and hope she'll use it to the utmost. Mrs Roberts letter will inform you what money I owe in the country and how. A settled peace. We have here at present very great rains. Dear Sir believe me to be most sensibly

" Your obliged humble servant and
affectionate Brother,
" David Roberts.

" Pray let me have the favour of a letter.
" *August 9th*, 1729."

" Dear Sir,

" Mrs Roberts letter yesterday gave me a double pleasure giving me an account of both your healths. I doubt not but that you will excuse my frequent letters. Mrs Roberts mentions Jones' account. I have ordered him to meet me with them and bring with him instructions for Ellices bill. I am sure my company is not very agreable to some people in Wales so shant think of seeing it nor indeed is there anything or any body in it that I have the least desire to see excepting who is at Erthig. I hope Mrs Roberts will send me the three hundred pound I am instantly obliged to pay, and advance me some more money to carry me abroad where I must endeavour to pass my time as well as I can. I would undergoe any hardship rather that she should any and

if you and she think any demands I have made too large pray lessen it. Doe me the pleasure of an answer to this whatever happens to me I have brought it upon myself so will bear it with spirit. I have renewed my cold much, beg you'l be so good as to see and get my bond from Mrs Drelincourt else I know not what they may doe if you my old friend does not stand by me. The town is very sickly and very empty. My best love and service attends your Mrs Roberts and Cosin York.

"Your most affectionate Brother and
very humble servant,
"DAVID ROBERTS.

"*November 20th*, 1729.

"Let Jones come privately and by himself. If I thought things could be done without my meeting him it would be better."

A jovial companion, the worthy Rector of Marchwiel, whose absence was regretted when prevented by his wife from attending a "Gander Party." He paid all due respect to the Squire and started not "the wicked man" till his worship was in his pew. He acted, too, the part of mediator in the ever recurring grievances between the Landlord and his Tenants.

"Marchwiel,
"*January* 17, —.

"SIR,

"The Bearer the Clerk of Marchwiel is your humble Petioner and His Crime Killing a hare on the snow, I doubt too comon a Crime—the temptation, it was for Mr. Wykes his mother's Landlord, who had given him ten shillings for ringing the Bell to welcome him home, and Mr Wykes is the sollicitor for him and designs to wait on you to acknowledge the faver of checking him

and to let him go for this time—The Informer is William Jones your Tenant and I do not know whether he will yet inform ; but I must own he has had provocation enough, for the Clerk informed against him to you for Shooting of pigeons—and so they will be even in informing and you equally mercifull in pardoning the first offence of this kind in them both. My man had made me believe, yesterday was your Sunday to be att Marchwiel and therefore Prayers were not begun till after eleven. My service to all at Erthig and am

" Your obliged humble Servant

" Humphrey Foulks.

" Lock's 3rd Volume is returned to Mr Yorke."

" Marchwiel,

" *Saturday three a clock.*

" Sir,

" I had my lesson perfect long before I reach't Gresford. But the Chancellor is at Pen y lan and I did not think fit to come back thro' Wrexham. I think to send my man as I proposed at first to Gresford to morrow morning, and go there or to Pen y land early on Munday before he can get out any where and send you or bring you tidings of a full comission for what you want on Munday. I myselfe upon recollection have been present when a Surrogate marryed a couple in a private House but he was a clergyman of authority and a friend of the Bishop and Chancellor. If on second thoughts you have thought fit to alter measures be pleased to send word otherwise you need not put yourself to the trouble of writing to yr humble servant

" Humphrey Foulks.

" But I am still of opinion that it is not proper to make applications to a young Surrogate when the Chancellor is so near and he Vicar of the parish."

A more valuable legacy than his tattered letters Major Roberts also left behind. This was the African Servant, whose portrait with a rhyming description hangs in the Servants' Hall. All that is known about him is contained in these lines, and if, as it would appear, he did receive Christian baptism, the name then bestowed upon him is not recorded. The lines that follow were written long after by Mr. Philip Yorke; the letter at the time by the Rector of Marchwiel.

A BLACK Æt 25

Of the conditions of this negre,
Our information is but meagre;
However, here *he was a dweller,*
And blew the horn for Master Meller.
Here, too he dy'd, but when, or how,
Can scarcely be remembered now,
But that to Marchwiel, he was sent,
And had good Christian enterment,
Pray Heaven may stand his present friend
Where black, or white; distinctions, end;
For sure on this side of the grave
They are too strong 'twixt Lord & Slave:
Here also lived a dingy brother,
Who played together with the other,
But of him, yet longer rotten,
Every particular's forgotten,
Save that like Tweedle-dum and dee,
These but in notes *could ne'er agree;*
In all things else, as they do tell ye,
Were just like Handel, and Corelli.
Oh, had it been in their Life's course
T' have met with Massa Wilberforce,

They would in this alone have joined
And been together of a mind ;
Have raised their horns to one high tune
And blown his merits to the Moon.

" Marchwiel,
" *May* 16, 1721.

" Honoured Sir,

" The season of the year and fair weather call upon us to mend our ways. But the Parish are desirous to have a Meeting at Marchwiel at 11 a clock next Munday, to agree about the Rates of Teams, etc. and if there be no inconvenience found, to sink the 6 days work for this year.

" We believe they will bring the Fine money into the Parish very soon. I hope there will be a handsom Meeting and we shall be glad if you can conveniently honor us with you Company and advice. I know no reason if the Major send his Black to me to-day, but that he may be Christened this morning, if you go abroad before the Holy days. Whitsuntide was the solemn time among the Primitive Christians to Christen the Catechumens But we having no number of adult persons to Christen now-a-days that day may be public enough.

" I have heard from Mr Humphreys Owens of Boddidda this week, but I advised him to meet you altogether att Hendrevawr.

" I am your most humble servant,
" Humphrey Foulkes."

John Jones, whose address is the Eagles Tavern Wrexham, had perhaps been in the service of Mr. Meller, and so a letter addressed to him found its way into the master's hands. As an account of " High life below stairs " by a member of the circle it is really inimitable;

one can almost see the attractive Ellis, well primed with Welsh and Reading beer, singing his love songs to a circle of admiring wenches in the underground kitchen of some big London house.

" London,
" *December* 18*th*, 1725.

" Dear Brother,

" I received your Letter according to the date which news I read in it was very Surprizing to me and to all my fellow Servants when they heard of it to hear of your Parting they bethought by themselves that I put the Jest upon them till I explain'd your Letter to them and that satisfyed them that Information was true it is a wonderfull thing to me that you are for parting I thought you liked your place very well and that you had good Wages and good Coming in beside if you will be advised by a friend I would have you keep your place if it is not too late for I do Protest that places is very scarce now at London there is very likely men out of business ready to starve here I do not question but you might have good place if you was to come because you have some friends here in Town Next Monday I begin with Mr Powell upon my own charges My Lady won't give me any this year she sayd therefore I would not have the time lost I put myself to learn for three months that will be three Guineas out of my pocket and afterwards if I can meet with a good place I won't refuse it, Stephen Sir Griffith Willms Harper is turn'd off Ellis comes to see us every day I should say every night we have all the maids down into the Kitchin and Ellis sing his fine opera tunes to that degree that our maids is quite fallen in Love with him I brings him to the Seller first to drink a Cup of the Welch beer and likewise a Cup of the Reading beer that set Ellis voice on bravely.

Captain Draper fought a Duel with Pistolls a Horseback and the noble Captain was shot through the thigh and Ellis swear his Master will die I saw Jack Davies' Letter that he had from you he desiers his service to you to conclude with all my fellow servants' service to you is all from your friend, " J. W.

" Xmas ale is come in.

" *To* Mr John Jones at the Eagles in Wrexham Denbighshire."

It was in 1714 Mr. Meller had been approved best purchaser of the Erthig Estate, in 1716 that he bought out Sir John Trevor, the principal mortgagee. He had already lived there occasionally with his sister, Madam Meller, to keep house; and among the most interesting of his kitchen bills is that of the poulterer at Xmas time. When eight chickens were to be bought for 2/7 and 7d for " two chickens more " happy indeed was the lot of the frugal house keeper now ringing dreary changes on mutton roast and boiled.

	£	s.	d.
Pd for 8 Chickens	0.	2.	7
Pd for 3 Woodcocks	0.	1.	9
Pd for 5 Pullets	0.	2.	6
Pd for Scouring sands	0.	0.	7
Pd for Eggs more	0.	0.	8
Pd for wheat cakes	0.	0.	6
Pd for 2 Chickens more	0.	0.	7
Pd for a Woodcock	0.	0.	8
Pd for a pound soft soap	0.	0.	7
Pd for 4 (?) Packthread for Cook	0.	0.	3
Pd for Quire Cap paper	0.	0.	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Pd for Carrying to Erthig	0.	0.	$7\frac{1}{2}$
Pd for 3 Codlings	0.	4.	6

	£	s.	d.
Paid for 8 [ ] of Butter	0.	3.	0
Dec. 3 Pd for a Goose	0.	2.	6
Pd for 2 ducks	0.	1.	2
Pd for a Calves head	0.	1.	3
Pd for a Side of Veale	0.	5.	3
Pd for 9 Sweetbreds	0.	1.	8
Pd for 16 Eggs	0.	0.	6
Pd for 10 Eggs	0.	0.	4
Pd for 6 sixpenny Jugs	0.	3.	0
Pd for 10 [ ] of butter	0.	3.	10
Pd for 12 Chickens	0.	4.	0
Pd for 3 Woodcock	0.	1.	7
Pd for 4 Rabbits	0.	2.	0
Pd for 2 Wild ducks	0.	2.	6

Abundant hospitality on especial occasions, and particularly at Xmas time, now as then, is the custom at Erthig Hall. Between times a comfortable simplicity is the order of every day.

These two bills of fare belonging respectively to the days of Meller and Simon, would by no means be unsuitable even now.

SEPTEMBER 20, 1792—WEDNESDAY DINNER

Knuckle of veal and Bacon

Line of Mutton roasted Pudding

Leg of Mutton roasted for the Hall

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1720—DINNER

A fryed Sole
Apples Sallad Beef roasted

Boiled Beef for the Hall

But the neighbours were not satisfied with a sister housekeeper, so eligible a bachelor was a "rara avis" in the country side. All were anxious he should marry; one adviser more bold than the rest even went so far as to select the lady,—Martha Lloyd of Halgton, the "Patty," who in her mother's letter "was learning to dance and to write." Meller carried this letter in his pocket, to judge by its worn and tattered condition, but however much he may have considered it, either he did not take the advice, or perhaps Miss Patty may have refused him.

"*To* JOHN MELLER Esq
"In Bloomsbury Square

"From a true respect for your merit proceeds the following advice.

"You are now at an age to marry, if you doe and would. the steps which you have hitherto made towards the establishing of yourself upon the best foot with your Erthig Neighbours, have suceeded to your wishes. And to compleat this happy Establishment, give me leave to put you in mind that to take a wife out of some Worthy Family in that Countrey is the most sure way to do it effectually. Amongst them I believe you have reason to conclude from your own experience, none more deserving than the Lloyds of Halton. For that extraordinary Character they have so ever born for their integrity and wisdome is I take for granted, in a good measure confirm'd to you by the dealings you have already had together.

"The consequences that would probably attend the bringing of a stranger amongst them are [. . . . . .] amongst the ladyes of that famaly (or indeed a far larger extent) I know none more to be esteem'd than Mrs

Martha Lloyd for besides her birth and knowlege of the wayes and manners of the countray; she has all the good breeding; good humour, sobriety, and discretion requisite to make a Religeous, wise man Happy in a Wife. . . .

III

Erthig Hall, when Mr. Meller first came into residence, seems to have been denuded of all but the bare necessaries of life; a few things only having been put aside in "the Blue Closet." These he must have taken over with the house or how came he in possession of "Ante Towells pewter," Elihu Yale's "skreen" and the letters and parchments which came from Pentre'r Clawd? He now set to work to furnish it with every luxury that good taste and a long purse could command. His nephew Simon, acting as his London agent, wrote to him innumerable letters, mingling his shopping notes with information about stocks and shares, more particularly that hideous speculation, the South Sea Bubble, which spread financial ruin throughout the whole country.

Besides its unrivalled situation, Erthig Hall possesses to an uncommon degree the special charm of a real home. It has always been lived in, and since Edisbury's time has never changed owners except by natural succession. In these days, when every suburban villa and every terrace house boasts of antique furniture supplied from the curiosity shops, there is an extraordinary sense of restfulness in the aspect of furniture still standing in the exact spot for which it was originally made. Most of the bedroom furniture, oak and mahogany, very simple in design and sober in colour, dates from the incoming

of Mr. John Meller. For him also was erected the gilt bedstead with embroidered satin hangings in the State room, where Elihu's "skreen" stands out against a wonderful Chinese wall paper of birds and flowers on a sea green ground. The tapestry in the little withdrawing room on the north side of the saloon was woven by Meller's orders from French designs and sent down by his nephew "when there was no fear of damage by water on the road."

It is not surprising to find that Mr. Meller, who had such excellent taste in furnishing, was also the owner of some beautiful silver, including a large rose-water dish, silver-plated on brass, (Jacobean ?) which bears his arms, and a lovely silver Monteith bowl, in shape like a lotus flower (English work, but engraved with Oriental designs). A good deal of the Hutton silver, which did not come to Erthig until towards the end of the eighteenth century, is also Georgian and Queen Anne.

The oldest piece of all, however, is a small silver wine taster dated 1636 which belonged to old Simon Yorke of Dover who died in 1682. Its identity is established by a clause in the will of Elizabeth, widow of Philip of Dover : "and to my said nephew Simon his grandfather Yorke's Silver Taster."

Posterity may be grateful to Mr. Meller for having so carefully kept his accounts. There are bills to Madam Meller (his sister) for all sorts of table furniture, glass, linen, and cutlery; his own for coach-building and coach-horses, besides those for provisions of various kinds. It is interesting to know what was paid not only for current expenses, but for things which remain in the house at the

present time. The weights which belonged to him as fee-farmer of the Wrexham tolls will be described later; but the bill which he paid for them comes best in this place.

March 28, 1717. John Meller Esq., one of the Masters of the high Court of Chancery bought of John Snart, Maiden lane

	£	s.	d.
a brass Bushel Measure,	7.	10.	0
A Brass Gallon Measure	1.	15.	0
a Brass Quart Measure.		11.	0
a Brass Pinte Measure,		7.	0
a Brass Ell and yard	1.	0.	0
a 56lb, a 28lb, a 14lb, a 7lb, of Brass weights, (att 12d a pound.)	5.	5.	0
a 4lb. to a Draham of flatt Brass Weights,		9.	0
a 128 ounes pile of weights for weighing Bread,		14.	0
ffor sealeing att the Exheqquer and Indenture,	1.	13.	4
ffor Engraveing the weights and measures,	2.	10.	0
ffor exterordinary ffees, Coach hire, & Expence	1.	1.	0
ffor my days work & Insireing them att Westminster.		10.	0
ffor an Act of Parliament, Case & hamper.		2.	6
	23.	7.	10

"Recd. the same day of John Meller Esquire, the sume of 23 poounds seven shillings, & 6 pence. In full, of this Bill, & all demands I say received, by me

"JOHN SNART."

"*April* 17, 1720.

"HONOURED SIR,

"Yours of the 3rd came to hand, and this morning I called upon the Person who sent the gilt Leather hangings and Screen, and told him that the 5 Shillings charg'd for Joyning ye Hangings, was not menconed when the Price was agreed upon; He said it was always paid, but was nevertheless willing to abate the same if Insisted upon. So I paid him 12.15.0 and tooke a receipt. I also called on Mr Hunt to press his sending the Bed he is making, on Monday next; his Wife told me, that the Bed as to their Worke hath been finished long since;

but the Gilding and Carving is not ready nor will be 'till towards the latter end of the next Weeke ; she saith she is very desirous of having the Bed out of her hands ; and for that Purpose hath sent severall times to hasten them. I shall take care that the Wrought Bed be sent on Monday next ; and have left with Mrs Smith the Money, together with a Recpt Promising to Return the Money if the Bed be not liked—I have given Notice to Wymondesole to pay the money on the 12th Inst. I suppose I shall hear from You whether You would have Mr Hurt's bed, sent by the Waggon on Monday seven Night. I have called twice at Mr Foulke's Lodging but not been able to Meet with him, but I am to meet with him to Morrow by Appointment. when I shall make your Pleasure known to him. . . . The Wall of your house is up, and the chimneys to Your Study. The S.S. Stock hath not varied upon the Bill being paid.

" I am your most Dutiful Nephew,
" Simon Yorke."

The reference in Simon's letters to " the gilt bedstead " cannot be passed over without a special description of the " State Room " ; and here let it at once be said that no illustration, however admirable, can give any idea of the real beauty of the Erthig interiors, where harmony of colours reigns supreme.

The old Chinese wall paper is green—not forest green—but the green of Ocean's depths where a ray of sunlight striking through a crevice illumines the recesses of a rocky cavern. On the flowering branches are birds, each one differing, and coloured to nature in every gorgeous detail. The shape of the bedstead, the gold eagles which, like heraldic supporters, form the carved head, are very clearly made out in the illustration; but the

THE BLUE BEDCHAMBER WITH MEZZOTINTS BY FRYE

exquisite delicacy of the oyster-white satin hangings profusely embroidered in delicate shades, pink and brown predominating, and with mandarin processions meandering round the borders, cannot be successfully reproduced in a photograph. From whence did Maeterlinck derive his symbol of happiness, the Blue Bird? Has that quaint fancy an Oriental origin? Whole flights of blue birds pervade these embroidered draperies, and a group of large blue birds look down from the canopy. "To really appreciate its beauty, you must have slept in it," said an enthusiastic guest.

Less magnificent but not less interesting than the State bed chamber is the Blue room with its oak panelled wall, beautiful old chimney-glass, and handsome heavy furniture. A creepy room this, though cosy, with its four mysterious doors, one of which, leading into the "Print" room, reveals, when open, a dark mysterious recess, the whole thickness of the wall of the old house, and within that recess a hidden cupboard where a man could just stand upright. Ten mezzotints, male and female portraits of severe aspect (the work of Thomas Frye, painter and engraver, who in 1747 opened a china factory at Bow) look down on the intruder, and in the dancing firelight take upon themselves the semblance of life.

SIMON YORKE *to his uncle* MR. MELLER

"*October* 13, 1720.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I received yours with the key Inclosed; and have bespoke the further Quantity of Glass, which with what was before bespoke will be sent away on Monday

next. I was with Mr Jeffery's this afternoon, he gives his humble Service to You, and desired me to acquaint You that he apprehends he cannot at Present do anything about the Ground for the Church, by Reason his Interest in the Acton Estate is so very remote, nor is it at present settled, there being shortly to be another hearing, he said that by the Decree already made, the Estate is to be sold in Chancery, or so much thereof as will pay the Debts which are not as yet settled ; he said further that were he actually in Possession, he should be willing first to see the ground and houses before he made any agreement about the Sale of them.

" I called upon the Tapestry Weaver this day, and believe he is not mistaken in his Computation. He shewed me the Paper my Aunt left with him. There was one piece to be 17 ft. 2 in. whereof 10 ft. was Yours so that the New Work [measurements, obliterated] which according to the method You have used in Measuring will come to about 28 Ells. When I opened the Press for my Aunt's hatt which was sent away on Monday I did see there, a New piece of Tapestry which I believe is the same as You reckon'd was in the Weaver's Hands. I have not got from the Weavers, what is already made because the 7 : 2 new Worke is not join'd to the 10 ft. Piece, nor will it be done until about the Middle of next Weeke. I desire to know whether you would Please to have the Tapestry which lies in the Press sent with the other when finished.

" My Cousin Watts gives his humble service to Yourself and Aunt. The Stocks are still declineing, the S.S. about 190.

" There was a Proclamation out this day by which the Parliament is Prorogued from the 21st Inst. to the 25th of November at which time they are to sit upon business.

" I am your most dutiful Nephew,

" Simon Yorke."

It is unfortunate that Simon Yorke when writing about the tapestry weaver does not give any clue to his name or address. The whole subject of English tapestry weaving is exceedingly interesting, and an authority on the subject, after seeing merely an illustration of the Erthig tapestries, finds in them a resemblance to those of one John Vanderbanke, whose workshops were in Great Queen Street, Soho. The subject appears to be the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon.

Handsome Mr. Meller had a weakness for mirrors. In the year 1720 he spent £96 on glass. Later on another bill extending over four years of purchases amounts to nearly £300.

		£ s. d.
1722	Act Meller and Belcher.	
Novm 5th	To chimney glass	35.00.00
	To packing	00.15.00
22	To a Chimney Glass	16.00. 0
	To a lesser chimney glass	14.14. 0
	To packing them	00.10. 0
1723		
July 15	To a large peir glass	36.00. 0
	To a fine large Sconce Silver framed	21.00. 0
	To a Chimney glass	26.00. 0
	To packing the Chimney glass	00.10. 0
	To packing ye peir glass	00.10. 0
	To packing ye Sconce	00.10. 0
Sept 23	To a glass Scollopt 38 by 24	05.16. 0
	To a glass ditto 28 by 8	00.18. 0
	To packing them	00.05. 0
1724		
Aug 25	To a fine large sconce	14.00. 0
	To ditto	14.00. 0
	To packing them	00.16. 0
	To a glass and head to ye sconce yt was broke	06.00. 0
1726		
June 6	To a fine large peir glass	50.00. 0
	To a Silver table with a glass top and a Coat of Arms cut and gilt on itt	14.00. 0

		£ s. d.
	To a fine wallnut tree glass table cove frame	04.10. 0
	To packing ye large Glass	00.12. 0
	To packing ye tables	00.06. 0
		£262.12. 0
	By Cash receed	50.00. 0
	Ditto	80.00. 0
	Rest due	£132.12. 0
	Recd More	31.10. 0
	By abatement for ye glass broake	05.00. 0
		96.02.00
1726		
18th Augt	Recd Moore	50.00. 0
	Rem	£46.02. 0

		£46.02. 0
10th Octr	paid	£20.00. 0
	To a pier Glass	07.00. 0
	To a Chimney Glass	02.10. 0
	To a dressing Glass	00.05. 0
		29.15. 0
		£16. 7. 0

"*December* 10, 1720.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I have paid Mrs Lloyd in the Cause Lloyd *v.* Williams, the sum of Forty Pounds, being for a Years Maintenance of her daughter, due the 26th November last.

"The Tapestry Weaver called here, to acquaint me that the other Piece of Tapestry was finish'd; and would have been done sooner but that he himself hath been laid-up with a Fitt of Illness.—I desire to know whether upon receiving the Tapestry I may pay him in full. I shall not now send it into the Country without orders

TAPESTRY ROOM—DELFT JAR WITH ROYAL ARMS AND INITIALS W. AND M., SIGNED ALBREK L. KONINCK

because I believe that the Roads being full of Water, the Tapestry may possibly receive damage.

"The S.S. Stock did fall yesterday at the Books to 160 and in the afternoon to 155. I was in the city this day at Noon, when the Stock was down at 140. We all flattered ourselves that upon the King's meeting ye Parliament there would be a new scene of affairs, and that Publick Credit would again Revive; but it is not so: The King in his Speech recommended Temper and Unamity to both Houses, as the most effectuall Meanes to extricate themselves out of the present difficulties; and the House of Commons in their Resolutions upon the Address, seemed as if they would proceed accordingly. But there is so much heat and Resentment against the Directors of the S.S. Company that it will not be Matter of Great Wonder if the Stock should fall to 100 or under. All people as I finde, seem to agree that the Directors well deserve Punishment for their mismanagement; but a more proper time might be found out, to enquire into their dark and wicked Transactions, among which, that of declaring £50 per cent Dividend for Twelve Years, and thereby drawing many Unhappy People in, to their Ruine; ought to be remembered against them. There have been already several warm Speeches against them in the House of Commons Particularly by the Master of the R—— and the House have appointed next Thursday, to enquire into the state of Publick Credit of the Nation; at which Time it is expected there will be warme Worke.

"People have for some time past, given themselves liberty of talking against certain Gentlemen, in possession of very great Trusts, and the State of Affairs, should continue long, as at Prest, there may be too just cause for Suspition. I believe were you at this Juncture in Town You would not be Inclined to dispose of any Stock; so I shall not do it: There seems to be some

Doubt at present whether the Books will shutt at Xmass, or not, for as there is not any talk at Present about a Dividend, it would be hard upon the Proprieters of Stock that they should be shutt, for I question not but upon the shutting or not shutting the Price of Stock will much depend between now and Xmass.

"There is another Circumstance attending the present Misfortunes, which makes People very uneasy; and that is, that the Interest due at Michaelmass last upon the Redeemables is as yet unpaid, nor is any Time fixed on the Payment. I have not seen Mr [Craster] this three Weekes past; he must now be inevitably a very great Sufferer, the Money upon the Agreement being to be paid at Xmass. I have Inclosed sent You the Commons Address; The last words on the first side—viz Punish the Authors of them—were inserted in the Address by way of Amendt upon the Motion of the Master of the R—— as I am Informed.

"I am your most dutiful Nephew,

"Simon Yorke."

It was with surprise not unmixed with disbelief that the present owner of Erthig Hall received the information that sober Mr. Meller had actually exchanged a challenge with a neighbouring Squire. The cause of the provocation cannot actually be proved, but the following possible explanation may be received in default. Mr. Williams with some other hot-headed Welsh gentlemen had removed "their neighbour's landmark"—a sin which, like duelling, is an unpardonable offence. The act of aggression is described by Meller's steward and again alluded to in a letter from a friend made interesting by Latin quotations and local news.

"*To* JOHN MELLER Esq.

"SIR,

"I write this by my Lord Chief Justice's express order (who is set out for London this morning) to acquaint you, he has been certainly informed, there is a challenge has passed between you and Mr Watkin Williams and he expects and requires of you that it proceed no further, also that you will by the bearer under your hand give me your word and honor in it. I have now wrote to Mr Williams to the same effect.

"I am Sir

"Your most obedient humble servant

"HENRY WINNINGTON."

From MR. MELLER'S *steward*

"*April* 15, 1721.

"MOST HONOURED SIR,

"I send this to acquaint your honour that upon Wenesday last in the morning Mr Robert Williams, Sir William Williams, his Son and Mr Watkin Williams his bailiffe one Daniel Jones, went and cutt down the Gattes and Posts in the lane by David Parrys. I have been tould that Mr Wykes is deeply Ingaged with that party in this affaire, but Mr Holland that Innosent man who would have the world believe he had no hand in it som fewe days before it was don, tooke down his Gatte that was just by and hedged it up, but I am tould by one that sawe him view it som little time after the action was over, if I had had notice of it when t'was to have been don, I believe I should have Putt a Stop to it for that once and if your honour will give me leave to have em putt up agen they shall not take em down upon so easy termes and Ile keep people to watch them. David Parry tels me that Mr Edisbury gave him orders that if

any Cartes came thro' that lane without leave that he should seaze one of the horses, and pound em, which he once did, but what satisfaction the people made Mr Edisbury he did not knowe, it can be proved that that lane and a little bitt of an orchard that was once on the side of that lane was lett for sixteen shillings a yeare, if you will think fitt to give me direction what I shall doe I will observe it as neare as I can.

"The vaults are Covered with the lead and yesterday wee begun to fill it with the earth that is in the Court, and some time next weeke I shall have the way finished to the french mill. We go on sinking for coal as fast as wee can. Mr Probert tels me I shall have Whimsey redy the beginning of next week to go there, the Gardenner desires to know what coulor your Honour would have the Flower potts painted of. I have bargained with the tanner for the barke this yeare and if your Honour pleases begin to fell some time the next weeke I will not trouble your honour with any more by this but begge leave to subscribe myself

"Your Honours faithfull but most obliged
humble servant to command,
"Richard Jones."

"Upon Thursday which was the next day after breaking the gatts Mr Watt Williams and his friends dined at the feathers in Wrexham and report that Robert Samuel the butcher treated him and his friends with a whole lamb. This bouncing Captain is not cum into the Country yet and it greaves me to see his Servants twice every day airing their horses all over the meadows belowe the Hall and not content with that but round Cocker's meadows and where they please in gwern Erthig. It is thought Mr Ellis is gon over to the other side for he dined with Mr Wat Williams at the feathers."

Mr. Thomas Meredith *to* Mr. Meller

"Honoured Sir,

"I received the favour of yours with a promise of Cotton's surprizing list which I waited for two or 3 posts, or I would have troubled you sooner, and returned a faithfull character of their meritts to the best of my understanding, as to the persons in yours named I believe you know them sufficiently well particularly the drunken parson; but in the Generall I am of opinion with a great man who presides in our Courts whom I have heard to say, that in a disaffected Country the fewer were in power the less mischief could be done &c: yet I wait with Impatience for this list, and in the mean time with Mr Myddelton to whom I imparted this novel return our most hearty thanks for your timely prevention, we are pleased to find that our Success has galled them, with equal pleasure we reflect on their dissappointment but here I shan't forget to let you know the very post that the Dedimus come down all Mr Myddelton's letters and newspapers were stopped, and did not come down till the following post and opened, the Dedimus not coming to the Generall post office till 12 at night (as Will Travers tells us) escaped, and what is most remarkable a gentleman at Denbigh even before the post came in said the Dedimus had miscarried; and sometime before Mr Myddelton's marriage his letters frequently came opened; These are scandalous practices and must be done by some Clerk in the Generale Office. Mr Myddelton desired me to write to the Commissioners and I desire your judgement how I shall proceed. If you have any acquaintance there 'twill be of great service.

"Sed tamen amoto quæramus seria ludo." Hor. Sat. i. 27.

"Your Doctor grows more wicked every hour. Ned Davies the other day offered Bubble-Wykes 12^{s} 6^{d} the

cord for his wood. Dr Bubble-boy hearing of it 3 days after immediately sends for Ned Lloyd of Plas Maddock and at the same time sends for poore Wykes under pretence of some business, makes him drunk, claps up a bargain for 3000 cord no less at 11^{s} the cord, in black and white, by which the boy is bitt for £300 and upwards, Oh rare tutor, oh rare tenant—Ut melius possis fallere sume togam.

"One thing more is also remarkable that the Doctor protests that he knew nothing of the design of pulling down your gates and the Devil take him (blessing himself) if he was privy to it, Yet the day before he took down his own gate and hedged up the vacancy—this he did to prevent only suspicion, but surely the fallacy is very naked, &c :

"Since yours I discoursed seriously with Mr. J. Travers about the Arbitration and he told me he would write to you fully the post following.

"I came from the Castle last Tuesday where we drank your health very heartily severall times—and last monday was sevennight honest Dick Jones gave us some bottles of ale at Erthig where we did the like, were very merry with J. Travers, R. Hughes, Dr. Benjamin and expected Dr. Ffoulkes, but his wife would not let him—and now wait for your return to repeat our pleasant hours, &c. but now I fear I have tired you and must beg your pardon for the length of this letter, had I had more time it should have been shorter.

"I am, Sir, Your most obliged &c.
faithful servant,
"Thomas Meredith.

"*May* 12, 1721.

"Pray the list, and don't forget the Doctor, for Peace sake drive him home. Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum ! We have sworn 8 new justices R. E. says he has taken the oaths too often and witnessed, [smack him]. Dr. F. waits your return and I guess expects your company."

MR. MELLER *from his steward*

"*June* 20, 1724.

"MOST HONOURED SIR,

"The enclosed one cum by frydays Post, and the other upon Sunday. Since your Honour left Erthig there has been 4 Coaches full of Gentry to see the Hall; the first on this day 7 nights, Mr Mitton of Hailstons and Mr Holland, with both their Ladys. Mr Eyton of Leeswood and som other young Gentlewomen along with em, and this day their cum the Lady Billot, Madam Edgerton and som 4 or 5 gentlewomen more, all desiring their humble services to your Honour, My Mistress and the Major. they all admired the Hall and Furniture Mitily. It has been very uncertain weather for the Hay Harvest this weeke last past. I hope I have got into the Barne 18 loads of the great Meadow hay in very good order, the rest will be in too morrow night if drye weather tomorrow. The Ayre pump to the lesser Vault is layd down. The Bricklayers and Carpenters have kept prety close to their worke since your Honour has been gon. I have nothing more to add by this, but wishing your Honour well at Erthig and that soon. I beg leave to subscribe myselfe,

"Your Honours faithful humble Servant
to command,
"RICHARD JONES."

The vaults, which were being leaded under the superintendence of Richard Jones, are of considerable extent, and it is possible that they may be even older than the house. Meller was intending to stock them with wine, a fact which had evidently reached the ears of the Wrexham Wine Merchant. The amount of wine ordered by Mr. Edisbury at the time he was Sheriff fairly takes

one's breath away, but that no doubt was consumed on the spot. Mr. Meller's requirements were of a more moderate kind.

Wine merchant's letter

"Honoured Sir,

"I have with some difficulty, through Sir Harry Bunbury's Interest, procured for you 5 dozen Excellent French Claret, ½ Haut Bryan and ½ Margauz. I was concerned for your dissapointment in the hogshead of claret, and resolved if possible to procure you some worth yours and freinds' drinking. I have sent per Bearer 12 Bottles of the Haut Bryan, and the other 4 dozen shall wait your orders, or I will send em Per the Bearer if you desire it. They cost dear but all Clarets are risen 10 °/₀ and I desire to get nothing by these 5 dozen but am glad cou'd get em for You till such time as can procure a hogshead that will please. I think Sir you are almost out of red Port, and I have just 1 hogshead and a half left of that wine, the hogshead is as good as ever I drank, old dry and clean wrack'd of, and if You please to have it, shall not be tapp'd I paid for this 5 dozen Claret 3/- per bottel besides the bottel and carriage, it is the same wine Sir Harry drinks and always stood him in almost 3s before this large advance in clarets. Will you please to have a taste of the Hogshead of old Port. Honoured Sir

"your most obedient humble servant

"Thomas Beech."

"Wrexham,

"*December* 11, 1725.

"Honored Sir,

"I could have been mighty glad if the Claret might have been tasted in the Cellar, because of the

disadvantages attending a Sample drawn out and afterwards carried, as well as that the hogshead suffers by vent and taking any quantity out, however in conformity to your Commands I have sent one bottle (the hogshead being very full) and doubt not but it will please. I chose it out of a large parcel and bottled it with several other wines for your particular use it having the approbation of all that tasted it above the rest of the cargo. When it has lain but a little time in your vault and after that been some time in Bottles I doubt not but it will drink excellently well, therefore (if it pleases) could be glad you'd send for it next Monday (if it suits your conveniency) that it may be the sooner settled in your Cellar and fit to drink.

"I am with all due respect your very
faithful humble servant,
"THOMAS BEECH."

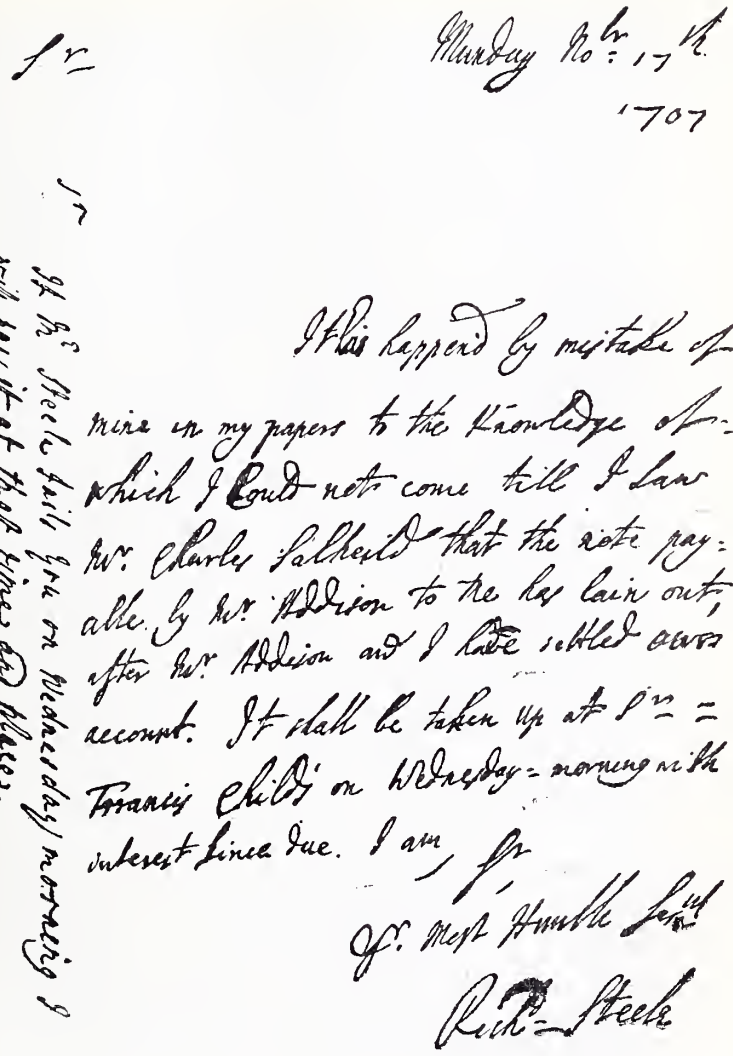
Not a romantic personage this worthy wine merchant, yet he had his ambitions and a soul beyond the mere selling of hogsheads. He wrote a poem called "Eugenio," and sent contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine* as Fido. E C. and Mrs. Manage. In these he appears to have entered into rivalry with a poetical neighbour, Mrs. J. Brereton, "Melissa." She showed him her compositions and asked his advice, which he took advantage of, to attack her in print. When she accused him of duplicity, he denied it, "not without shockin' imprecations." This is the version of the story given by her biographer. The following notice occurs in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1737: "Died May 17 1737 Mr. Thomas Beech Merchant at Wrexham in Denbighshire suddenly, He was master of a fine genius, author of 'Eugenio' a poem just published, and some other

Poetical Pieces." Mr. Beech in fact hanged himself in a barn on the Chester Road, driven it is said to desperation at the scathing criticisms on his literary work. An autograph letter of Dean Swift written to Mr. Beech has found its way to Erthig, and is stuck into a "common-place book" belonging to the first Mr. Philip Yorke. In substance it is tactful and courteous; once only "the savage Dean" flames up into wrath, and that is in speaking of what was always to him the land of his banishment. "No printer," he writes, "in this begarly town and enslaved starving kingdom would print it without being paid the whole charge." But Swift had no mind to yoke the dray horse of the wine merchant with his own fiery Pegasus, and, beyond a few obvious and by no means severe criticisms, the aspiring poet got little assistance in that quarter.

In the same "common-place" Book, side by side with Swift's letter, is an autograph note by Steele which has the additional interest of a postscript by Addison.

Ascending from the wide carriage sweep beneath which are the vaults, a double flight of steps leads up to a glass door opening into the entrance hall. Here two full-length portraits at once attract the eye, Sir Thomas Jeffreys and his notorious brother the Chancellor, looking more than life size in their high heeled shoes, and great wigs.

Sir Thomas wears his robes as a Knight of Alcantara in Spain, the curious hat which lies beside him being part of the costume. The Chancellor also wears his robes of office. So life-like are they, so ready do they appear to step out of their frames, it is difficult to believe



Sr

Monday Novr 17th 1707

Sr

If Mr Poole fails you on Wednesday morning I will pay it at their house the first place.

Yr Servant
J: Addison.

It has happend by mistake of mine in my papers to the Knowledge of which I could not come till I saw Mr Charles Saltheild that the note payable by Mr Addison to me has lain out, after Mr Addison and I had settled accounts. It shall be taken up at Sr = = Francis Childs on Wednesday morning with interest since due. I am Sr

Yr most Humble Servt

Richd Steele

FACSIMILE OF LETTER WRITTEN BY STEELE WITH POSTSCRIPT BY ADDISON

that they do not occasionally descend. No one has ever seen them on their wanderings, not even the compiler of the Chronicle, who stole down after midnight at the New Year in hope of meeting them.

In 1657 a full length portrait of the Chancellor hung in the Inner Temple, but it was removed after his disgrace and sent down to his father's house at Acton. It is believed that it was after the sale of Acton that these pictures came to Erthig, but no documentary evidence has at present been found there to prove the statement.

" I am delighted with them," writes an expert on these matters, " they are certainly by Kneller in my opinion. The very characteristic handling of the draperies, the delicate yet forceful modelling of the faces all point to that artist. I do not feel any doubt about it."

A man's immortality is in the seed of his loins. Great possessions, broad acres, a beautiful home, are as dust and ashes where there is no son to step into the inheritance. Life must have been dreary for Master Meller when mirrored walls threw back his lonely reflection, and time hung heavy on his once busy head and hands. Kind he was always, benevolent, a God-fearing Christian man, respected rather than loved. Poor clergy appealed to him with the certainty of relief, his distressed neighbour Mrs. Brereton pestered him alternately with tiresome letters and still more tiresome verse. Not this sort of correspondence is it which makes the arrival of the post bag a welcome event. The letters of his tenants tell of what was going on at Erthig, those of his acquaintance of local events. Meller, having finished the house, was

THE HALL—PORTRAIT OF JUDGE JEFFREYS. (KNELLER?)

laying out gardens ; to his religious cast of thought may be attributed the crowning of the " High place of Baal " with a green " Cathedral aisle." He was no sportsman, a trait handed down to five generations of his Yorke successors. Edisbury had pet dogs as well as sporting ones. The family favourites, dogs and horses, are mentioned in later Yorke letters, but Meller and his nephew Simon had no interests of this kind, or no one was intimate enough to enquire after them. Almost the last letter received by Meller was from the ubiquitous Major Roberts, acting as a tool for Sir Robert Walpole, the " country gentleman's friend."

MR. W. W. WYNN

" Llansilling,
" *October the 17th*, 1824.

" SIR,

" The last Quarter it seems the Gentlemen there have appointed one Hugh Muckleston, an old, infirm decrepit Blind man to be High Constable for the Hundred of Llanlleth and Mochnant, a person who has served the office before, about 26 years agoe. He is now past seventy years of age and consequently very incapable of serving the office. However being appointed of Malice and Spite. He is willing to serve it, and only begs the Favour of you to swear the Bearer as his Deputy, and in so doing, you will much oblidge Sir

" Your very humble servant.
" WAT WILLIAMS WYNN.

" My Father or self would have sworn him, but thought it not convenient being we neither of us were pres[t] last Quarter I am ashamed I have not been to wait on you and your brother and Mrs Roberts. I shall certainly do

it before I go for London. I desire you will give my service to your [ ] and accept of same yourselfe."

The original peerage of Macclesfield had become extinct in the person of the Earl of Macclesfield, who had been so active a partisan of William of Orange, but was revived in the family of Thomas Parker, Baron, and afterwards Earl, Macclesfield, the son of Thomas Parker an attorney at Leek. "The silver-tongued Counsel of the Midland circuit" is the epithet applied to him by his contemporaries. He sat as M.P. for Derby in the Whig interest, was knighted in 1705; through the influence of the Duke of Somerset he was made Lord Chief Justice in 1710, and at that time refused the Seals. He was a favourite of George I, was created Baron Macclesfield in the County of Chester in 1716 with a pension of £12.00 a year for life! "l'appetit vient en mangeant"—Thomas Parker, in spite of this ample provision was suspected of peculation, and impeached before the bar of the House where he was at that time Lord Chancellor. Opinions differ as to the guilt of Lord Macclesfield. He was not accused of taking bribes, and it was not then illegal to sell Masterships; but so great had become the scandal of the sale of offices and speculation with the money of suitors in Chancery that after this time Chancery funds were lodged in the Bank of England. Lord Macclesfield was a man of violent temper and had many enemies; so few even of his own party pined him in his fall. Six weeks' imprisonment in the Tower with a fine of £30,000 was the sentence passed upon him, and on his liberation he retired to Sherburn Castle, Oxford.

Summons to MASTER MELLER *to appear as witness at the trial of the Chancellor*

"At the Committee appointed to prepare Articles of Impeachment of High Crime and Misdemeanors against Thomas Earl of Macclesfield

"Sr George Oxenden Bart.
in the Chair. "17 *die February*, 1724.

"Order

"That Mr Meller do attend this Comittee on Friday Morning next at nine of the Clock at the Parliament Chamber in the Inner temple.

"GEORGE OXENDEN.

"Mr Meller
"Bedford Row,
"Bloomsbury Square."

An account of two or three Welsh speakers has already been given; the third in the series has yet to be explained.

Sir Thomas Hanmer was the son of William Hanmer by Peregrina, daughter of Sir William North of Mildenhall; he sat in Parliament for Thetford, Suffolk and Trent. He accompanied the Duke of Ormond on a mission to France, "where never" says his biographer "had private person such honour paid to him." Swift considered him as "the most considerable man in the House"; but Swift, it is believed, helped to write his speeches. Lord Hervey describes him as an honest, formal, disagreeable man, whose great merit was loving his country, whose great weakness was loving parsons. As a Tory he was looked on as a wavering one until the bringing forward of an Act for free trade with France. The exclusion from this Act of Spain, Portugal, and Italy, roused violent indignation among the London traders,

an indignation lashed into fury by rival pamphleteers. Hanmer had the chance of his life, and seizing "Occasion by the forelock" made his famous speech:

"While he had the honour to sit in the House he would never be led by any ministry, the principles he acted upon were the interests of his Country and the conviction of his judgement and upon this consideration alone he must oppose the Bill." The Government was defeated and the Bill killed. Elected Speaker in 1714, Hanmer was fetched out of his parish church to an extraordinary sitting at the illness of Queen Anne. But travelling was slow in those days; ere he reached town the Queen was dead and Parliament had met and adjourned without him.

Hanmer's Shakespeare, beautifully illustrated and bound, was once a necessary adjunct of every library, though the commentaries he made are no longer considered to be worthy of respect. Pope, in the Dunciad, refers to Hanmer when he says [Book IV. 11. 105], "there moved Montalto with superior air." Hanmer was successful in politics, unhappy in his domestic life. Of him it was said "He married an old woman for love, a young woman for her money and was fortunate with neither." He had no children. A nephew, Sir William Bunbury, inherited the Mildenhall property, that in Flintshire went to a cousin of his own name.

"Betterfield,
"*August* 22, 1727.

"Sr,

"I send this Messenger to enquire after your health and to let you know how unfortunate I think

myself that I have not had an opportunity of waiting on you at Erthig. My intention was to have done it on my way to Chester but upon enquiry I found you were not then at home and but very little since as I have been informed. Now the Weather and roads are such that I doe not believe a coach can pass and some business will hasten me into Suffolk in seven or eight days time which is sooner than I intended to remove from heare. I have really been disappointed of a pleasure for I proposed a great one in waiting upon you which I hope you now believe and then

"I am, Sir, Your very humble servant,

"THOMAS HANMER."

From SIR ROBERT MYDDELTON *of Chirk*

"DEAR SIR,

"The hurry of this Town causes our thoughts of the Country to enlarge; and form mighty Ideas of retirement; it may justly be allowed to be a satisfaction when a person is so happy (as I am) to have a learned and worthy Friend within a few hours' reach, Without fatigue of travilling. I hear strange accounts from the Country of what has past; I am surprized that tumults and wrath shoud boldly take station on the Bench of Peace, my thoughts have been much agitated upon that account.

"All Friends judging it proper, I intend to hasten for the Country, where I shall do myself the honour of further assuring you of the reall esteem of

"your most affectionate humble servant

"ROBERT MYDDELTON.

"London,

"*February* 13*th*, 1728."

" Dear Sir,

" I am truly sensible and thankfull for your great kindness to me the short bill of affairs are that Mr. W. W. W. sent messenger to meet Hollinghead and offered fourteen guiney's all that the servant had to him ; to deliver the writt. Mr. Brisco att London woud not lett Mr. Travers have the writt, tho' he had had a pair of gloves, and a man and horse waits on him to bring it. My brother is att Eaton and till I heard from him coud. not dispatch this to you. which now I do with pleasure Since things are safe, Hollingshead saith there ought to be seven days between the County Court and the delivery of the writt. I can not understand it otherwise but that the County Court day ought to be the seventh day. if I am mistaken pray send a messenger to find me by eight of the clock, for I am going to Lanfilling ; where Mr. Williams hath used threats, but under that Predicament, both you and my Self shall live long, during that time I lay claim to ; you will always have a

" Faithfull Humble Servant

" Robert Myddelton.

" I humbly begg that Mr. Black may be attended by some friend to asist lest his flock shoud go astray.

" Chirk Castle,

" *March* 19."

From a tenant.

" *January 9th*, 1729.

" Sir,

" If I was conscious that I had been guilty of any thing that deserved censure, I should not presume to lay before you my grievances. And I am so sensible of Your goodness and love of Justice that I am perswaded You will pardon this freedom and afford me your Advice by which I may find means to etricate myself out of the oppressions I labour under.

"You were so kind as to assist me with your good Offices in making up the affair between Mr Jones and me And accordingly I gave him Goods above the value of his Demand with which the men in Possession were satisfied and quited my house. I imagined their cruelty would have ended here but a month after they called me out of my bed at twelve o Clock in the night under pretence one wanted me at the Eagles about some business. I not being willing to loose an opportunity of being serviceable either to my neighbours or myself, I got up and went when I came there I found it false and at my return to my great surprise they had broke my Door Lock and hinges abused my Wife and child in a barbarous manner and threatened to murther me, they robbed and plundered my house to the value of seventy pounds and upwards.

"Thus have I been used for no other fault but executing the trust reposed in me which proceeds from no other motive but a malicious design of making me and my family irrevocably miserable. Since I came into the Place they cannot charge me with any neglect in anything that belongs to my office, when I have any other under my care they never want work my enemies have done all in their power to throw me out of my place and I must be ruined with out the assistance of some well disposed person.

"From Sir, most humble and obedient
servant
"THOMAS CALCOTT."

IV

A letter from Sir Philip Yorke, Lord Hardwicke, though unimportant in subject can hardly be omitted from an Erthig Record, for the two branches of the Yorke family claim descent from a common ancestor, Simon, son of

Bartholomew Yorke of Calne in Wiltshire, who towards the close of the seventeenth century settled at Dover, where his son Philip practised as an attorney. Simon had many sons; from the fourth, Philip, descended that branch of the Yorkes whose seat was till lately Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire. The founder of the family fortunes, also Philip, was educated at an academy in Bethnal Green, and articled as a solicitor.

He rose in his profession with almost miraculous celerity, and it would be tedious to recount the offices he held. He supported Walpole, held office under the Duke of Newcastle, and received the seals in 1737. The great beneficial measures formulated and passed by him are described elsewhere in the course of the narrative.

"Sir,

"I used my best Endeavours to get your friend Mr Lloyd excused from being Sheriff, but before your Letter came to my hand, the two other Gentlemen upon the List had made an earlier application, the one by Lord Cholmondely and the other by the Bishop of St. Asaph, so that my Intercession came too late especially not being provided with a Pocket Sheriff to propose. I begg you will be assured that I did everything in my power and had it not been for this unlucky accident I should certainly have succeeded.

"As to your own Affair I perceive you are justly sensible that it is impossible for me to advise You, considering the situation I am in. It seems to me to be the safest and rightest way to state the whole case, but you must conduct yourself by the advice of your Councill and your own Conscience. All I can say is that provided all reasonable despatch be given I daresay no advantage will be taken of a few days difference in point of

time. My most humble service waits on all friends with you.

"I am, truely Sir,
"Your faithfull humble servant,
"P. YORKE.

"Lincoln's Inn,
"*Jan.* 15, 1729."

Mr. Meller was on intimate terms with Mr. Simon Yorke, father of Sir Philip, and had helped to push the young man on his entrance to the bar. Later on he stood godfather to his son and constantly supplied information useful to the government concerning his disaffected Tory neighbours at Erthig. Among the Hardwicke papers are several of his letters; the one at Erthig is a rough draft in his own handwriting.

"SIR,

"I take this opportunity to express the great satisfaccon I had in the agreable news my Nephew sent me of the Birth of your Son, and I wish he may live to be a Comfort to your Family a Blessing to his Country, and an ornament of the Age in which he lives.

"My Nephew acquaints me of your kind Intentions to endeavour an alteracon in the Commission of Peace, which is a matter much wanted, and without which wee shall not be long able to hold the advantages wee have allready gained.

"When I first came down into this Country I found the Gentry to be generally Jacobites, and the Comon people to be intirely under their power; soe that I thought it allmost impossible to expect to make any great Advances for the interest of the Government without either gaining a perfect intimacy and Friendship with some Gentlemen of Figure or by finding some proper

means of dividing their Party. The first of these methods I have tryed these four years, and have been tolerably successful and well received by the Gentry in these parts, though at my first coming down I declared myself a Whig, but whenever wee happened to speake of Government matters I thought I could discern the strong inclination towards the Pretender,though Prudence and good Manners allways kept them from speaking out their thoughts before me. Finding therefore no likelihood of having any sure hold of them by any new Friendshipp I could contract I sought my hopes of some favourable Opportunity to divide the Party, and which these late struggles between Mr Myddelton and Mr Williams have at present effectually done; And the Advantages thereby are very evident For though most of the Gentry adhered to their former Principles, (taking Mr Myddelton to be a Tory), yet the ordinary People both Free-holders and others are wonderfully changed for the better, and seem to be pleased that they are got clear of the yoke of their Old Masters. This extraordinary change I attribute in a great Measure to the struggles which have been made in procuring votes (for it now plainly appears that some Gentlemen about Wrexham who were the former Governors have very little interest of their own. And what they hitherto boasted and made use of was the neglected Interest of other Gentlemen who lived at a distance. This discovery hath made the comon People begin to despise them, and it is now very evident that many joyned with the dis-affected Party, more out of fear of the Gentry than any ill-will toward the Government. (You will be more easily Induced to believe this when I tell you that this whole Country is governed by fear, and the lesser Gentry are as much awed by those of better estate as the poor People are; and those of large Estates do as much awe and tyrannise over the lesser Gentry as they

do over the Poor. But tho' the advantages gained to the Government by these struggles are very considerable and are every day increasing yet they are not without our apprehansion of having all turn'd back again. If wee are not supported from above, and nothing can give more life at present than a new commission, and some of the Comon People already begin to consider whether Mr Myddelton and his friends will be able to support them, and others who have declared for Mr Williams have owned that they did it out of their apprehension that his Authority and Power might have ruined them if they had refused. For tho' he and Sir William Williams rarely ever will be troubled with the comon business of a Justice yet they never fail to shew their Authority where they themselves are concerned. 'tis they who put the ordinary people upon Offices, or excuse them as they think fit, (and thereby gain a very great Influence over them). Neither is it a small Influence which they have over the midling Gentry, who observing that at the Quarter Sessions the Bench of Justices is generally swayed by the Tory Party and generally side with Sir William Williams' interest, they thinke it advisable to be of the strongest side, and till of late many thought either the Jacobite Party were countenanced from above, or at least, that they were so powerfull in these Partes that the Government were afraid to turn them out. The advantage which Sir William's family have by being Stewards of the Crown of the Lordshipp of Bromfeild and Yale is no small addicon to their Power, especially when they have endeavour'd to make all people believe that they enjoyed this in their owne Right, which was no difficult matter to be believed by those who observed how arbitrarily they exercised their Authority. What increased this Belief was the Impunity which they observ'd, most of the Magistrates to punish those who impudently and in Publicke, drank the Pretender's Health, and not only

winked hard but those in Power were guilty of the like practises. It is not forgott in these Partes that Mr Williams and others are like to be taken up at Shrewsbury for drinking [. . .] health, and was then forced to make escape privately out of the Towne, but no Publicke enquiry was made to prevent it. And our Party, if I am not wrong informed, hath lately done the like, but the Person who first spoke of it endeavours now to stifle the Story and hath quite forgott all that passt. They likewise observe that the Custos Rotulorum in Flintshire tho' he had the good luck to be recommended by the Lord Cholmondeley for a Whig, yet that he takes all opportunity of aiding with the Tories, and is now in their Cabals, as I think all his Family are too. That Sir Robert Cotton who hath the like place in Denbighshire hath been very rarely (if ever) observed heartily to give countenance to the Whigs and now under a Pretence of being disgusted by Mr Myddelton is gone over to Mr Williams' Interest. The observance and remembrance of these things have begun to make some Impressions on those who were lately come over to King George's Interest, and these [ ] apprehensions are increased by what hath been lately flung about by Sir William's party, who, having some apprehension that the Comission was to be renewed, and finding nothing sure, do now give out that Mr Williams hath so much Interest as will secure all his old Friends, and that Sir Robert Cotton is a Whig, and his endeavours are to procure a Sheriff appointed who will answer their expectations. It is easy to apprehend that it is not a little shocking to Persons who are come over to a new interest. I very much feel that if something be not speedily done, the Tide may turn the Humour of the People against it, and then 'twill be next to impossible to bring back the Interest which a lucky turn hath now put into our hands, and given us the advantage of. Wee are likewise under

a further disadvantage. There is now some apprehension that Mr Myddelton when at London kisst the King's Hand, as in fact he did, and 'tis now industriously spread abroad that Mr Myddelton is turn'd Whig; which, if it were certainly known, would carry off a great number of the Tories who have allready promis'd him their Votes. But by good luck the story is not believed, specially by reason that they observe that most of the Dissenters in our Parts have gone over into Mr Williams' upon supposition that Mr Myddelton is as violent a Tory as the other, and declare that since they cannot expect any help from either humour, that they choose to fall in with the man whom they most fear, and who is most likely to hurt them. Some of them indeed have told me: that if they were assured Mr Myddelton was of my opinion they would still be for him, but I dare not as yet set them right And therefore till matters are better settled, I have undertaken to be silent."

From a tenant

"Eccles,
"*March* 8, 1729.

"Sir,

"Am favor'd with Mr York's Letter, If you had condecended to have made known to me by Mr Richard Jones or any other person that you whear dissatisfied with me in relation to the tenement, woud have waited of you and Indeavoured to have given you satisfaction, but hope I am not gilty of the whole charge Mr York lays so home upon me, and I will not excuse myself whear I have failed in my performance but refer myself to you as hopeing you woud not put me to any difficulties as to the planting the number of 20 trees yearly Oaks or Ash is what I never find in all the time I have lived their and that year I came away I planted 140 Oaks

and Ashes when I came to the Tenement you know, Sir, it was a perfect wilderness over-run with rubish which was a grate expence to me in clearing and inclosing and in all the Inclosures which I took in, I ditched and planted both with quicksetts, and trees of Oak and Ash without number, As to my letting the tenement without your consent in writing is what I own I did, but first moved it to you which you did not seem Inclind to allow of, I was twise after to have waited on you, but nither times had the honour of seeing you tho the Covenant of being oblig'd to residence was very hard and what I did not suppose you would ever impose on me as to the erecting and building one new room with a chamber over it is what you will find is done and in sinking a sellar so grate a flux of water opened that the workmen thought it impracticable so I built a room at the front of the house in lue of the Cellor and built a necessary house in the garden I built a Cart-house, Calf-house, and Pig styes, I made up the walls round the out-building, some being falln down and others falling down, I made all new doors to the Out-buildings, and window-[ ], I new slated both the house and out-buildings except one Bay. You will find, Sir, upon enquiring that I spared no cost to Improve the Tenement as much as if it had been my own land, and am sure I can justly say I layd out some Hundred pounds their in Improvements, and from the smal advantages I reap by it is not worth my contending, but the Pleasure I take in the Situation is the only motive that moves me to affect the place, and coud I have so order'd my affairs hear woud have come to have lived at it again this Spring, but If it pleas God to spare my life and you, to continue me Tenant, wil so order my affairs as to reside thear again as soon as possably I can. Mr York mentions that you forthwith requier me to give security on the not takeing the advantage of the forfeture of the Lease I was in hopes, Sir, the Bond

I gave for the performance of Covenants was sufficient Security I am imbarked in some affairs now which will not admit of my coming over to wait of you immediately, but whatever you requier will writ to my tenants to comply with and shall refer myself to such terms as you shall think fit to impose on me.

"My service waits of Mr York, and I am, Sir, with grate esteem,

"Your most humble Servant,

"MATTHEW FLOYER."

Surely the patience of even the "good and benevolent" Mr. Meller must have been tried by the correspondence of "Melissa." She, poor thing, unable to make a living out of poetry, was adding to her income by a genteel trade. Her cordial, for which the recipe has not been handed down, was doubtless excellent, but so much praise cannot be given to her verse. Her poems were lengthy, her correspondence voluminous, but a very small selection of either will suffice.

EXTRACT FROM A POEM

Oppress'd with Ills, and sunk beneath the Weight
Of sad Affliction, unrelenting Fate ;
Successive Woes, and never-ceasing Care,
Abandon'd to Misfortune, and Despair :
How can the languid, long-neglected Muse
One tuneful strain, or cheerful thought infuse ?
But elevated Worth like Phœbus Rays,
E'en through the Gloom, its influence displays :
Suspends my Grief, inspires with Joy supreme
Pleasure immense ! where Meller is my Theme

* * * * * *

With Wisdom, Honour, Wealth, you're amply blest
Three Talents rarely by one man possest.
But Sir, your Christian Graces far excel ;
Rich in good Works, and wise in living well
True Wisdom you have found, celestial Grace !
" Her ways are pleasant, and her Paths are Peace "
In this uncommon Path still persevere
And of the pious Few still Chief appear ;
May that kind Pow'r, who all your good conveys,
Crown you with Health, Content, and length of Days !

* * * * * *

But lest for ever, we despair to find
All these Endowments in one Man combin'd
Propitious Heven, has pour'd them All in One ;
And generous Meller, is the Wondrous Man.

" *December* 26, 1729.

" If I were to thank you Good Sir, for every Kindness you have favoured me with, I should swell my letter to a tedious length ; therefore without descending to Particulars, I humbly beg that you will accept of my grateful Thanks in the Lump : And that you would give me leave to entreat your further advise. I think it full Time to begin about the Spirits, since the Preparation is so tedious ; but I am at a loss how and where to send for the Ingredients. I have no Way to send to the Chymist at Chester but by the common Carrier, or by some of my Acquaintances and I am loth to trust either ; for the discovery of any of the Ingredients might be a great Detriment. If any of your servants should go to Chester, I fancy I might have a Quantity by them, without suspicion Or if you think it best for me to send to London I humbly beg your direction, how, and too whom to write, as soon as you possibly can. I think it highly necessary to begin the Preparation for if a quick Call should come the Stock I have would soon be exhausted.

I acquainted you that Dr. Lloyd sent for a Guinea bottle for Sir R. Cotton. I have still (including that you sent me last Monday) 2 Guinea bottles, 2 half guinea ones, a doz. of the 2 ounces and 8 ounce vials, these may continue long on our Hands; but I hope the Contrary and therefore would be glad to be preparing to encrease my Stock. And tis absolutely necessary the Spirits should be allow'd all the time requisite to perfect them, for if what I sell should prove less excellent than what you have formerly bestow'd my Trade would soon be destroy'd therefore I would not spare Time nor any Ingredient, to make it perfect And with your approbation, I should be glad to have Spirits of Bens (as the Recipe directs) in the Composition If I had the Ingredients I should be very busy about them, tho' perhaps I must have recourse to my Good Master for another explanatory lecture I have not been well enough to go out of my House since I came from Erthig. I heartily wish you perfect health, and a merry Xmas, and I am, honoured Sir

"Your most obedient humble servant

"J. Brereton."

"*November 26th*, 1729.

"Sir,

"As your Benevolent Christian temper inclines you to do all manner of Good Offices; so I believe you will excuse me from making Apologys for the trouble I now give you. Mrs. Myddleton sent the Letter, that comes with this last night. When you, Sir, have had leisure to consider it I hope you will return it, and with your usual goodness, send me your opinion of it that I may convey back to Mrs. Myddleton.

"Mrs. Wright has wrote to London for vials; and I have sent to Chester to have a new seal engraved. If it please God to give a Blessing to this Undertaking, I

shall have abundant Reason to praise his mercy and goodness in raiseing me such a Benefactor. I think there is not anything can yield a more sensible Delight to a rational Creature, than the reflection of having supported the oppress'd, relieved the afflicted. This satisfaction You, Sir, may enjoy in an Uncommon Degree but perhaps I can raise it to a higher Pitch, when I have assured you that Providence, could not have directed you to one who has suffer'd more Affliction. If the being reduced to unhappy Circumstances, the coolness and unkindness of old Friends and the Insults and abuses of unprovok'd Enemys are Calamitys (as sure they are) I have had a Load sufficient to send me to the Grave. But that merciful God that sees my Sorrows, has appointed you, to lend me a friendly Hand to lighten my grievous Burthen. He only can reward you; and that he may restore your Health and continue you who are never weary of well doing, to be a Blessing among us; is the unfeigned and ardent Prayer of

" Honoured Sir Your most obliged and
most obedient faithful humble servant
" J Brereton.

" Last week we sold 10/6 worth of the spirits but none as yet this week."

Without going to the lengths of admiration expressed by persons receiving or expecting favours, a tribute may here be paid to the qualities and attainments of Mr. John Meller, in whose dignified sonorous prose there is more real poetry than in Mrs. Brereton's laboured couplets and halting rhymes.

Unfortunately very little remains of his own writing, only some drafts of his own letters and a lengthy

epistle to his nephew Simon, summing up the details of a local libel case, once of some importance.

The libel, which consisted of a set of scurrilous verses and an offensive letter, was perpetrated on an unpopular Magistrate,* John Caleb Lloyd of Wrexham Abbot. The verses, seven in number, each begin with the words "Sir Carbury, Sir Carbury," and end with the refrain "Nelly Alone and I." The postscript of the letter with its reference to a purse of Monk's money and "that Charon's Fees are paid for you across the Stidgeon flood" is believed to have been written by one Jonathan Wragg, who is described thus: "He hath been at the University, but by rakeing from Ale-house to Ale-house hath dissipated his fortune and now seeketh to get into Holy Orders."

Meller, as a staunch supporter of the Government, held an important position in a neighbourhood where the Gentry were chiefly Jacobites, and his legal experience must have been of great value to his Brethren of the Bench.

The early part of this letter is occupied with the summing up of the libel case.

"The indifferent state of health that I am at present in, makes the further consideration of those matters very troublesome to me.

"Did not the good of my Country move me more

* It is said that Major John Lloyd was the descendant of Ambrose Lloyd, schoolmaster, of Wrexham, and that the widow of William Mondell, of Stansty, near Wrexham, married Sir Henry Vaughan, afterwards Lord Carbury, but no documentary evidence has been consulted on these points.

than a private resentment, I should not press this matter with so much warmth. I take Major Lloyd to be a very honest Gentleman and a hearty friend of the Government ; But if I did not see further inconveniences, than the Abuse of his Reputation only, I think I have interest enough with him, to have let this matter dropt ; but I cannot enter into the fashionable humours of the times. Some great men have schemes of reconciling in Whigg and Tory Interest. When they can reconcile fire and water I will believe, their projects are feasable. But til I find, some better demonstration than I have hitherto seen, I must believe they only intend make themselvess easie, let the vessel sink or swim. Who soever knows the state of our parts, for some Years past must admit at the supiness of some persons. If things should take a different turn, great men will want the Support of some whom they now overlook In times of common danger, it is the number of common hands, that must support the Cause, And without their assistance, tho [ ] and experienced Officers, can do no great matters. And should they by their supines suffer the Common Soldiers to go over to the enemy ; they must fall ingloriously and unpitied. I have heard it remarked that a dwarf standing on a Giant's Shoulders, may see further than the Bulky man. This I am sure of, that great men must see with other peoples Eyes ; and if they will give up to their Enemys, and not trust their friends, they will be in danger of making a sad stumble. For my own ease I am about taking my leave of public business. There will always be great men, but the highest spoke in a Chariot Wheel will not always remain uppermost.— You may let Mr Moor have the horses return'd, which he desires. I have considered your last letter and approve your management. If anything be further necessary relating to the business first mencion'd let me hear speedily from you. The time is short, and I

have not any satisfactory account relating to the Certiorarés.

"I am, Your loving Uncle,

"J. MELLER."

June 3, 1729.

Memorandum. That Jonathan Fabian and Joseph Wragg being brought before John Meller Esq., one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for y^e^ County of Denbigh by vertue of a warrant under the hands and seals of two of his Majesty's Justices of the peace for y^e^ s^d^ County, and being required to give Security for their good behaviour, he the s^d^ Fabian abused the s^d^ John Meller in the Execution of his Office, as a Justice of the peace, saying that he the s^d^ Fabian and Wragg were not used according to Justice Another further sd that you (speaking to and meaning the sd John Meller) have oppressed ye Country worse than Pick and Ball in the time of the late usurpation. The above mencioned words were spoke in my hearing which I am ready to attest.

Signed,

EDWARD PRICHARD.

From an unknown writer

"DEAR SIR,

"As our Winter Furlow is almost out, Mrs. Leycester and myself cannot return into the country without paying our Respects at Erthig. We intend (if the Weather permits) in company with Mr. Lloyd to dine with you tomorrow and shall bring our nightcaps along with us.

"Sir, your most obedient servant

"LEYCESTER."

"Mrs Jodrell of Tremlow and old Mrs. Davenport Cavely died on Saturday last."

From a Sporting Neighbour

"Sir, I beg pardon for troubling you about such a trifle so much out of your way, who are not a sportsman, as Fox hunting is, but unfortunately they have been very scarce this season and we want a supply. I know

about your house there used to be a great many earths where they breed and if you will do me the favour to order those people who are skilled in that way to get me as many litters as they can, and bring the cubs alive to Chester I will take care they shall be very well paid for all they can bring and shall esteem it a great favour from you to Sir,

" Your most obedient and humble servant,

" S Cholmondely."

From a Cheshire neighbour

" Chester,

" *August* 1729.

" Honoured Sir,

" A Noble Person of my Acquaintance in his way to Ireland, desired the favour of me to procure him some Perch fray

" I could not think of a Person that was more likely to have some to spare than you, knoweing how carefull you have been to stock your Ponds with all manner of Fish. Pardon me that I take the freedom to ask the following favour of you, that you would let me have some Perch Fray and permit me to send to your Steward to order somebody to cast a Net for them upon my sending to him.

" The Noble person hath waited here a week for the Yatch, which is now expected in hourly. If you grant The Request as soon as the Yatch comes, I will send a Messenger over who shall have particular directions how to carry them the Noble Person knowing of a particular Method to carry them which is in Bladders etc.

" I send a Messenger to know whether you can spare any Perch, and whether I may expect the honour requested. Pray my humble service to Cozen Roberts.

" I am your obliged humbl servant
and kinsman

" Thomas Parry.

"I should be glad to know how the Hooks; I sent answer, and next week I designe to waite upon you."

From a parson desiring preferment

"Dear Sir,

"The kind and Courteous reception I alwayes meet at Erddig, gives me reason to Believe, you have so much esteem and regard for me, as to lend a helping hand to my per-ferment If a proper occasion offers, I do not know of a more ready road to promotion in our way, than being some Bishop's Chaplain, perhaps Dr. Herring having so slender an acquaintance in the. Country may not yet be supplied with his quota. Could I prevail with you to Recommend me and use your interest in my Behalf. I think I should not miscarry. It is not (Good Sir) for the sake (of) a scarf, I desire the honour. But as it gives one a kind of a title to some of his Lordship's farther favours. I promise you this, by God's leave, so to behave in Every station, that you shall have no cause to repent of any kindnesses shewn to me, I submit ye. whole to your Better Judgement, and whether I succeed or not in my petition: I shall not cease to have the utmost opinion of your worth and goodness and to be with all truth and sincerity

"Your well wisher and very humble
servant
"Rd. Farrington.

"P.S. I take it a *Bishop* is priveledg'd to keep 6 Chaplains viz as many as a Duke. whether you are pleased to Befriend me or not in this affair let it be under the rose.

"Wrexham, *July* 11."

From a Judge of Assize

"Denbigh,
"*April*, 1729.

"Sir,

"I have been seized with a fitt of the Gout upon my Circuit and am not able to get further on my return home than this place without a Coach or Charriott, one of which a Lady in this town intends me the favour of, to Assist me as far as Wrexham, where I propose to be to-morrow at Noon, and having no friend but yourself that I can take the same liberty with in your Neighbourhood, and the circumstances of my health oblige me to so desire you to furnish me with the like conveniency from Wrexham to Whitechurch to-morrow Evening.

"The favours I have already received (for which I am truly thankfull) induce me to take this freedom, all which shall be allways acknowledged, and the first opportunity rataliated by, Sir

"Your obliged humble servant
"Thomas Martyn."

From a poor Parson

"Reading,
"*Sept.* 11, 1729.

"*To* John Meller.

"Dear Sir,

"I have longed wisht to hear of your health, it being a great while since I had any letter. I hope the occasion of your silence is not that the weakness of your eyes makes writing difficult and troublesome to you. Since my last the Small Pox has gone through my Family, not one of my five Children escaping, nor one I bless God miscarrying; tho' three of them were very full. This distemper has been for 7 or 8 months epidemical in this Town, and for three months it has been very mortal

especially amongst young People and Children insomuch that I believe near 300 have died in that time. Mr York paid a good while agoe the ten pounds you were pleased to give to the Charity School in my Parish. I had made my thankfull acknowledgements sooner, but that he promised to do it for me. I met him accidentally at Lincoln's Inn in the Spring, and I acquainted him that I had 62 of the New Edition of the New Manual of Devotions for you, but I never received any order what you would be pleased to have done with them. They are in sheets unbound. Without a School I must be forced to give over Catechising, and expounding on the Catechism which I do on Thursday Evenings during the Winter half year (for in Summer time people are at work and cannot attend, and on Sundays in the afternoon there is a Sermon. We begin Prayers at half an hour after 6 o'clock. And if it was not for the School, I doubt I should have few if any Children to catechise. When I was lately at London Mr Melmoth and I were wishing you had been nearer London; for then we might have hoped to have seen you sometimes. He is gone to Tunbridge, being advised to drink those Waters. I pray God they may be effectual. My wife joins in humble service to yourself and Sister. Let me have a Remembrance in your Prayers.

"I am dear Sir,

"Your affectionate Friend and
very humble Servant,

"F. Fox."

From a debtor in prison

"Wrexham,
"*Oct.* 14, 1729.

"Honoured Sir,

"I had the honour : to be asked : on the 11 instant : by the honnored Capt : Roach : and his freinds :

to drink the : king's : health : and that night : they made me sencible : that it was both my duty : and my interest : to refer : my : selfe : and cause : entirely to your : self : there : fore : I doe submitt to your demand : in the most absolute manner : and now : I doe wholly rely : on your : compassion : for to mitigate my : misfortune : as you shall think fit : and good : and may : consider : those small : instances : which I endeavoured : so far : as I was able : to gratifie you ; so I begg : you will let me know : your present demands ; and I will give you all the satisfaction : and security that I can : in which way you please to chuse———;

"Only good Sir ; give me leave : to entreat you : that Mr Jones' charge may be included : in your demand, as I may not be left in his hand and I humbly begg : you will excuse : my conduct : in my confinement : and before ; even all : I have offended you in : for I am very sure : that I have allways : and in all : companies : acknowledged : your former kindnesses : to me : in the most gratefull manner I coud : tho you may think I have not acted farely towards you : but I can plead innocency as to my intention : That way : so pray, good Sir ; make some allowance : for the disappointments : and difficulties : I have met with so long : and my : present misfortune : which might well make : me imprudent : in my words and say more than became : me : but now I am sensible of my folly which you know a deale of yet may consider my. . . .

"I hope you will haston : and please to release me : from this troublesome : confinement, in compassion : unto my poore : wife : whose circumstances : his very much reduced.

"I am your obedient servant

"John Grendly."

From his nearest neighbour

" Westminster,
" *March* 5, 1731.

" I am sorry to hear by yours that Meller has been of late out of order. I hope he will find great benefit by exercise in the approaching season. I have sent order pr the post for my agent at Wynnstay to send Mr Meller a master key of all the Park gates there. You may assure him it is with pleasure I shall hold of all opportunities of obliging him or you. I would not trust your letter to the penny post but sent one of my servants with it, if either of you have any further commands in ye town they shall be punctually obeyed by Sir

" Your very humble servant,
" Watkins Williams Wynn.

" We go in parliament as usual, as the sessions drawing near a conclusion, so the spirit of our Allies seems to decline so I guess we shall have no more peace, it is said that neither the Duke or Spaniard have as yet signed and the French not much consulted in it that in the common rumour it may come out otherwise when we are acquainted with it."

From his sister Anne Yorke

" *February* 13.

" Dear Brother,

" I was very much concerned when I enquired after your health to understand by my son that you have great weakness in your eyes which doth impere your sight. I could wish you would take advice of some able physician whose talent lay that way and desire you would use the herb Eyebright its name give it character, and Culpepper very much extol it in 2 of his books I had the

distilled water of it and thought it no way unpleasant being sweetened with sugar you may also make a tea of it or have it dried powdered to take in any manner you please, if it be not to be had in Wales if you please to give me orders I will as soon as it can be had. I will have it from our market and either still it or dry it and send to you I beg you will keep yourself as much as you can from cold as it allways falls on the weaker part. . . ."

Here re-enters upon the scene Major Roberts bursting with importance as the confidant of Sir Robert Walpole, who since April 1721 had been First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. England was distracted by faction, the mass of the people ignorant, and the clergy and the country squires holding Tory opinions had by this time become Jacobites. Walpole had determined at all cost to keep the Whigs in power, and his methods, iniquitous in themselves, had at least the effect of bringing peace and with it prosperity to the nation. What amount of ready money Walpole paid to his supporters has been disputed, and it was certainly much less than has usually been supposed, but "needy members discovered if they wanted money they must support Walpole, and ambitious members discovered that if they wanted office they could only obtain it by supporting Walpole." It is interesting to compare this statement with that of this very "needy member," "whatever places became vacant in our Country shou'd be at my disposal to oblige my friends, and that he would do everything he cou'd to serve me." Meller was an important Whig landowner in a Tory neighbourhood,

and Walpole, anxious to secure his support, did not scorn to avail himself of the meanest of tools.

"*December* 7, 1731.

"DEAR SIR,

"I give you the trouble of this in the Confidence of a friend and relation, which perhaps you may one day have a better opinion off than at present, therefore will not omit to acquaint you of my affairs as the foundation of Mrs Roberts' happiness, as indeed I have done little else since I was in town, but minded my business and cast about to retrieve past errors which I do not at all doubt off.

"This morning I waited on Sir Robert Walpole between seven and eight, being his own appointment by a freind that he might talk to me a little about our Country which he did in a most obliging and civil manner. I received it in the modestest manner but so as was suitable to my affairs. I detracted nobody of my Country, But as I found he was desirous I shoud oppose our great men for the County of Denbigh I told him I would do it very heartily but had hurt myself too much already to pretend to do it on my own bottom for they were rich men and therefore powerful, and not to be opposed by me without the Gouvernment would support me; to which he answered in the openest manner it shou'd be done, (nay more) in the meantime Convince me it should be done whatever places became vacant in our Country shou'd be at my disposal to oblige my friends, and that he would do every thing he cou'd to serve me; thus far I think promises are well and if you are willing to look forward in our affairs I believe you will have no reason to complain of my conduct; Indeed when I was down I was vex'd to my soul not to have admittance to you and the happiness of your friendship, for my head was almost turn'd with a mixture of vexations, and fain

to receive all that came till I got out of the country to compose myself. Now Sir, if you are willing to unite with me as a relation (which is all I ask you) I will do all I can for myself and Mrs Roberts, and I believe the only means to fix things in the country to my Credit is that you should seem to support me, and not the Goverment.

"I shall be glad to hear of your health by Mr Yorke and your sentiments on this head; I hope Mr Yorke will be as cautious of this affair being blown as is, Sir,

"Your most affectionate Brother and
humble Servant,
"David Roberts."

"Pray my love to Mrs Roberts and cosen Yorke. I have had but one letter from her since I left Wales. Sir Robert secures for me the interest of the Bishops the Duke of Ancaster and Mr Trevor by Lord Halifax and I hope we may get Baron Price and if some few friends in the country will stand by me I doubt not making a push to purpose."

But the intrigues of warring factions had ceased to interest Erthig's Squire. He was not an old man yet his sight was dim and his strength failing. As early as 1726 he himself speaks of his "indifferent state of health which makes business troublesome to him." His sister's letter with its quaint herbal receipt, the note of polite condolence from Sir Watkin Williams Wynn read as warning messages in the light of the after event. Meller lingered on some months longer, but when Autumn's cold and chill stripped the leaves from his newly planted avenues the first funeral train went out from Erthig Hall, and the Squire was laid to rest in Marchwiel

THE SALOON

Church. A plain tablet on the south wall of the quaint little edifice bears the following inscription:

" Depositum Johannis Meller Armigeri,
Nati XXII die Augusti,
Anno Incarnationis Dni Nri Jesus Christi MDCLXV
Denati XXIII die Novembris Anno Dni MDCCXXXIII
Resurgam."

CHAPTER III

SIMON YORKE THE FIRST OF ERTHIG

I. Simon and his friends : A facetious neighbour : Pleasures of town : Charles Yorke : A mystery solved : The Lucasian professor : A precocious philosopher : The bride's progress : Birth of the heir : From the seat of war.

II. The memorable " 45 " : A jovial physician : Rival universities : Old Anne Yorke : Tells of an execution : Mother-in-law and wife : Barbara Hutton : A naval wedding : An important alliance : A dishonourable peace : A wayside epistle : A lively visitor : John Caesar : The cattle plague.

III. An interesting correspondence : Montagues and Capulets : Westminster election : Parliamentary anecdotes : An extraordinary entertainment : The Gunnings at Vauxhall : The Prince of Wales : The Duke of Cumberland : The Saxony debate : Fleet weddings : A sad scandal : Jew and marriage bills : A tour in Ireland : " Accidental death " : The Russian masquerade : A country election : Richmond Hill : " The entertaining child " : Philip's first play : Fire in Lincoln's Inn : Philip the undergraduate : Locke on the understanding : Lengthening shadows.

I

SIMON YORKE, who at thirty-four years of age succeeded to his uncle's property, had not inherited his good looks. His portrait gives the impression of a small man with only a family likeness to his cousin the Lord Chancellor, and he was at no time brilliant or distinguished. " A pious, temperate, sensible, country gentleman of a very mild, just, and benevolent character " so runs his epitaph, with a ring of truth unusual in these over-laudatory descriptions of the deceased.

SIMON YORKE THE FIRST OF ERTHIG
By Wright

It is difficult to form an estimate of a person of whom so little is known; yet if a man be judged by his friends, Simon must have been something more than merely "amiable," the epithet applied to him in the same inscription.

The feature of Simon's correspondence is not the domestic letters, though they are many, but the political ones; and while there is no documentary evidence on the subject, it appears likely that he may have been (though not practising) a barrister of Lincoln's Inn. His friends certainly all appear to have belonged to the legal profession. There was Richard Woolfe, Owen Brereton, Edward Lloyd, and Mr. Sawyer, the last of whom writes of "the six old friends who drank his, Simon's, health over a haunch of venison" and they often travelled down to Denbighshire to enjoy the hospitality of Erthig Hall. Simon when he came into possession was a bachelor, and the anxiety of his friends that he should change that condition is openly and most amusingly expressed.

MR. POWELL (*a tenant*) *to* SIMON YORKE

"*February* 1736.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your letter which came of the latest found me embarrassed with so much buisyness, and want of hands to carry it on that I must desire to be excused from meddling with the new bargain of lands this year; all hands are buisy in ditching and hedging; my work goes on slowly for want of workmen, who are all employed in your work; and the only servant I have fit for such work, is disabled by a fall, and so bruised that he will be fit for

nothing a long time. the Holes are fild up at the expence of a deal of sweat from the poor Coachman and Jim—but your Hedges along the road are not yet cutt; your workmen just made a beginning and were draun off near a month ago to the other side of your Demeasne; it is possible March may wear away a good deal before those Ditches and Hedges are put in order; if I had had a Tenant, that was to be in possession of those lands at Candlemass, I would have taken care that those Fences should be finished against that time. I beleive nobody cares to enter upon lands that lie open, and are not like to be shut up til it is too late to venture upon any Husbandry upon them. I sent Mr. Jones word, that I cannot hold these lands this year, when I see you, I will speak more fully to this matter. But pray, Sir, why would you not speak to that point that I made a condition and term of acceptance? I guess how I am to interpret your silence but shall I beg of you for the future to speak in a most explicit and plain manner, that there may be no mistakes between us. if you think a tenant has not a right to implements of Husbandry, I have been long under a mistake having ever given my Tenants that allowance, from being told by an able lawyer, whom I consulted, that the Law gave a right to Tenants to cutt down any Tree that grew upon the farms for necessary uses, and would justify them in doing so even against the Landlord's consent and you have now an opportunity of asking at the Fountain Head. whether this be not Law.

"You will see by the Proposals which are published with a short account of his life, writings and Character, when we are to expect Bishop Fleck's works.

"What an Idea must it raise in a young Lady if her Lover, who begins his addresses in a day of Fasting and Humiliation? for I take it that you went that day, tho' you seem to disguise it, knowing that Friday was

the old Lady's day of retirement, that you might have the young one entirely to yourself; but perhaps I may be mistaken, and you stil address by Proxy, and Shew the Lady, that you intend to do by her, as you will do by your orchard—when the time of planting is over, you will look about against another time comes—old Bachelors that are used to dilatoriness, dont see how fast time slips away, till they are grown bald—but let me tell you a secret—the sooner you plant of any kind, the sooner you will reap fruit—but if you still fluctuate in suspence whether it be proper for you to plant at all, you are in a fair way of staying till the market is over as you have stinted yourself to two visits, and one is already over, if you can spare one minute in your next and last for other occasions, pray return our service to the Ladies, and tell them, they might have gone to any price The Tea we would have, is either the best plain Green Tea, or with a small mixture of Hyshem to it, let the price be what it will—but we would have no Imperial Tea.

"I sent as you desired to Mr. Jones; who intended to write to you by Wednesdays post. we are all much at your service, and wish you may not bring home again the scurvy reproach of being an old Bacheler. if the Ladies to, lose their wager, your credit will be entirely sunk with them, and every Lady in this Country—so that you must confine your news to London. they say, a Game Cock fights stouter, the more is laid upon his head. I am Dear Sir.

"Your Affectionate humble servant

"J. S. Powel."

" *To* Simon Yorke, Esq.
" At Mr Smiths at The Golden Boot in Chancery Lane.

" *May* 9, 1736.

" Dear Sir,

" One passage in your letter has induced me to give you the trouble of this letter, which otherwise I should have declined, from observing that a correspondance is not agreable to you; for this is the interpretation I am led to make of your long and profound silence of my former letter, some perticulars of which should have had some sort of answer; I am not now calling upon you for one, for I never care to drive a nail that will not go easily: and when a man is in a wood, he must endeavour to find the shortest way out of it. The passage I am to speak of relates to my refusal of a multitude of sixpences, for which except I can give some tolerable reason I must be content, and am willing, it should pass for a Foible a Whim, or Humour, or any other name the world usually gives to an odd action. If I had been at the Blew Posts, or on the Court of Requests, I certainly should not have scrupled taking the sixpences but as I live at home in an obscure corner of the world knowing little of what passes with certainty in it I may be easily pardened a mistake for such it appeared to me afterwards to be and it coming from Mrs Middleton of Cross Newydd that all sixpences, being much worn were to be called in, and to pass for weight, in order to be new coined, made an impression upon me and put me upon refusing them and seeing above 300 of them offered in one payment confirmed me that there was some truth in the report, in the belief of which I was very far from being single and alone. as I gave this reason for my refusal of them, it would not have cost good Mr Jones much pains to have sent *that* along with the account and indeed if he wishes well to his Master's

friends, and wished to see them live in friendship with him he should have given a true and impartial account of every action he thinks fit to lay before his Master, with the reasons that attended them. I make no doubt but he hath made his story good with relation to the money affairs however he has represented it, he shall never be canvassed by me; for I will never put my credit into the scale against his; and that there may be no misunderstanding between you and me while we bear ye relation of Landlord and Tenant to one another. I am firmly resolved never more to have anything to do with him. I can give some other reasons for this resolution, but it is not worth while to trouble you or myself about them. I sett out if it pleases God this week for Ely; whether you direct your steps for Erthig or the Spa, my good wishes attend you, as do likewise those of this family.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your affectionate humble servant,

"J. S. Powel."

EDWARD LLOYD *to* SIMON YORKE

"1737.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your long absence from your London Friends induces me to ask you, whether you never intend to visit them again, they now begin to despair of seeing you here till next October as indeed I do my selfe, if intended Matrimony makes you prefer the country to London, you have some excuse; otherwise to be absent from Westminster when the Parliament is sitting, from the Park where so many fair Ones are tripping along the Mall, and so many other amusements which hourly present themselves to you, and from so many friends who are as often enquiring after you, I own is matter of great astonishment to mee. If you say you really like

it, I believe you, for I am persuaded you can act any Character better than that of an Hypocrite. If I am to consider you as rusticated, let me have a representation of you in London; I have desiered Mr Wright (who together with Tom Lee I believe will be at your home when this letter reaches you,) to delienate the exterior of Mr Yorke, and here I have an opportunity for compliments on your Person and mind, but your modesty makes me decline them! We are now fixed and I believe, for good, at the King's Head almost opposite to your lodging, a new built house where the rooms are good and warm, the wine genuine if not abundant . . . . . requested, the Master of it our countryman and exceedingly oblidging, the Mistress neat and a good Cook, so that, were are, in short all pleas'd which is not common among so many and want nothing but your company.

"I deseire my service to Mrs Brereton and Miss Bab Mr Wright and Tom Lee and tell Tom Lee the dimensions of his Picture, are 13 inches $\frac{1}{4}$ by 9 inches and 3 8ths. Your Nephew is well and gives his duty and service.

"If you have not seen Dr Alured Clarke's Character of the late Queen, I will send it you, it is not the most accomplished Piece I have ever read, tho' I believe she was the most accomplished Princess. The P.— have notified to the K— that the Princess is with Child.

"I am your affectionate friend and humble servant

"Edward Lloyd."

"Caroline of Ansbach was a beautiful and accomplished princess, and why she married an ugly little strutting princeling, refusing an Emperor for his sake, is a mystery which can never be explained.

"He was unfaithful to her, yet she adored him. However sad she would smile on him, however weary she

would walk with him ; and she refused all medical advice until past human aid lest she should be prevented from her daily attendance at his pleasure. Her death bed scene described by Hervey is one of grotesque horror. The old king blubbering by her bedside while she 'unselfish to the last' where he was concerned bids him marry again. 'Non non,' cried the hoary sinner, 'J'aurai des maîtresses.' 'Mon Dieu,' murmured the dying Queen with perhaps unconscious irony, 'Cela n'empêche pas.' "

"Inner Temple,
"28 *May*, 1738.

"Dear Sir,

"I must unload my Sorrow first. I do assure you the death of Poor Nehemiah, is as great a loss, almost as any I could sustain. He was a very valuable man to his Country and his Relations. He was my right hand, my Prime Minister and my Sir Robert Walpole. I now congratulate you on the birth of a Prince who was given us yesterday morning, and I hope will long continue among us. And now for business; I sent your last letter to Colonel Lee, Jack Travers when he was in Town intimated to me that you had an inclination to have some share in our adventure on Mold Mountain. He will inform you of our method of proceeding and if you have mind of One, or two shares, in the work at Pant y Belarth and St Catherines Well, which will be divided into twenty four share's I can obtain them for you. I desire your answer as soon as possible, and keep this private, because we have infinite applications and it is an impossible task to please everybody. Those two Worke are like to turn out the best on the Mountain, the [Swymmers] Mr Trevor and Myselfe retain twelve share among us. Your friends give their service to

you and I am your affectionate friend and humble Servant

"EDWARD LLOYD.

"My service to Mrs Mainwaring and Mrs. Brereton."

ELIZABETH LAWRY *to her brother* SIMON YORKE

"*July the 21st*, 1737.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"My Mother received both yours which gave us great satisfaction to hear of your safe Journey to Erthig. I haveing not been very well for some time past with my old Complaint, the Gravell, made me desire Miss Nelly as she has sent me word she was to write to her Mother last tuesday was sen'night, to let you know your first letter was received but I suppose gooing by a frank it has miscarried as usueall. Mr Yorke has been ill at College, tho is now well again.

"Me lady, I believe was in some Confusion upon hearing of his Disorder. The account came to her in Jacky's letter last Fryday, which I thought proper to send to Mr. Pole as he is so intimate in the family to leave it to his discretion whether to acquaint them with it or not, but before it could reach him, come a servant from Lady Hardwicke to know if I had heard from my Son by that post, and if I could inform her any thing about her Son who she feared was ill as I gust from not hearing from him as she expected. I sent her word the letter which come to me was gone to Mr Pole which gave an account Mr Yorke was not well and where if she pleas'd to send for it she might see what my son had writ upon the occasion. She sent a Messenger that evening away to Cambridge who got there by Six oclock on Satturday morning and return'd back again the same night by ten and brought word he was very well recovered.

I believe Jacky's diligence was well taken tho' it might give some uneasyness for the present, we was invited last Monday to dine at me Lords but my being not well prevented it, I hope now the time will soon be arrived for his coming home, that my Jacky may be at liberty to doe the same, he very much commends him for a prudent person for his young time of Life, and likes him very well, which I am Glad to hear ; but had he been of a disagreable Temper it would have been some trouble to him to have drawn him how to have behave in Conversation with him, which is prevented by his affable temper. I suppose if my Aunt come to Chester there will be noe Correspondance between you and she. Here has been no answer to Jacky's letter he writ so long agoe. Have you heard anything from Mr. Robarts since you went into the country, pray tell Mr Brereton's I expect soon to hear from her, and in the meanwhile desire you will give our Service to her with my Mothers kind love joynd with mine for your selfe with my Son's duty.

" I am your loving sister,

" E. Lawry.

" P S My mother continues well except between whiles the gout in her feet."

Elizabeth Lawry has always a great deal to say about Mr. Charles Yorke, second son of the Chancellor, and Jacky (Mr. John Lawry) migrated to St Benet's from Christ's to act perhaps as companion or tutor to his more wealthy relative. Charles Yorke was always delicate, and in 1747 he had what his father calls a " milliary fever," and he probably never entirely recovered from a shock which is described later by one of Simon Yorke's London friends.

MR. SAWYER *to* SIMON YORKE

"Lincoln's Inn,
"*Saturday, August* 12, 1738.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your Good Nature and kind invitation are like to procure you a troublesome Visitor this Vaca- I intending to set out on Monday towards Your agreable seat at Earthig. I must call at Mr [ ] by the way at his House in Staffordshire for 4 or 5 days, after which I purpose to Kiss your Hands and hope I shall find you very well. Our good Friend Mr Travers says he will see me there, but can't set out so soon. The Town is grown very thin, but Six of your old Friends drank your health this day over a Haunch of Venison and all joyn in the service. I thought to have seen Our Good Friend, Mr Lloyd before this, I doubt not, and I hope he got safe down. We are hear in great Uncertainty as to Peace or War; but by the Stocks rising again we hope the former Our Great and Noble Friend, (for so I beg leave to call him) has been greatly indisposed with a Cold and slight Feaver; but is now much better, and has this evening gone to Carshalton. If the United prayer of all good Men will Keep him alive he must be imortall, at least his Reputation and Glory will be so. 'Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori.' I hope you will pardon this and give me leave to subscribe myself,

"Your most obliged and humble servant,
"E. SAWYER.

"I beg my respects to Mr Lawry."

A very special interest attaches to the three following letters, written all of them by Philip, son of the first Earl of Hardwicke, to his college friend Sir John Cust.

The first, from Cambridge was found among the papers of the younger Philip (son of Simon Yorke of Erthig) who twenty years later was also a member of St. Benet's College, and was published under his name in the *Cambridge University Review*. An error which, needless to say, was found out at once, led in its correction to an interesting result.

Gummed into the Erthig Family Letter Book so that the outside address (if there was one) can no longer be ascertained is another letter headed "Carshalton," always ascribed by its owner to Dorothy, the then newly married wife of Simon Yorke. Dorothy was a voluminous correspondent on purely domestic affairs, but the writer of this letter "carried a Horace" and quoted from Martial—a man, therefore, a young one, and something of a prig. A comparison of the handwriting clears up the mystery, the correspondent in both cases being the same Philip Yorke. The allusions in these letters to the "Philosopher" confirms this opinion, for the "Philosopher" was a MS. Journal written by Philip and his brother Charles Yorke, joint authors of the better known "Athenian Letters." "The studious Yorkes" had begun essay writing when thirteen and fourteen years of age, and with their friend David Papillon had a MS. Journal, the "Triumvirate," to which under the signature of "Paterculus," the Chancellor himself sent an occasional contribution. Both these journals are in the Library at Wimpole, and some scattered numbers were copied into a scrap book at Erthig Hall.

"Cambridge,
"*May* 27, 1739.

"Dear Sir,

"I would not willingly neglect any of my Friends particularly one for whom I have so great a Regard as yourself but to tell you the truth my time has been taken up with so many Engagements (call them trifling if you please) and there was such a scarcity of News that I have been obliged to forbear writing however I took care to send Mr Lawry "The Philosopher" which contains the Letters on the Sleepy Club and the translation from Lucretius wh. I hope he communicated to You. You may shortly expect another on the Use and Entertainment of Epistolary Compositions.—I am grown (to use Mr Dorrel's expression) a great "Skeemer,' and may rival Mr Lawry in Adventures, last Thursday sennight Tufnell and Myself set out in one Chaise and the two Newcomes and our New Fellow Commoner Mr Northey in another for Stamford but there could not be a more inauspicious Morning, for a perpetual shower and wind beating full in our faces attended us to Huntingdon, how often did Tufnell and your humble servant curse the weather and call ourselves Fools and Blockheads for setting out in such a wintry Day, at least for not hiding our heads in a chariot—add to our grievances that if we shut up ourselves with Curtains the closeness of the Chaise made us sick, if we opened them we were wet. However the Day mended upon us.

"We arrived that Night safe at the Noble City of Stamford, the next day being a fair one made us ammends for our past hardships and to make the best of it wee set out in the morning to see Burleigh upon the Hill where I was much delighted with the bold situation of the place and the grand Court before it, the Saloon is a handsome room but I think ill painted—in the evening we took a full view of the other Burleigh which is cer-

tainly a fine old house but I doubt whether the Connoisseure allow more than two or three of the Pictures to be Capital peices to be sure they are not to be compared with those which the great Collectors have since brought into England. When one observes the sweep of Rooms which is unfinished one thinks the house incompleat but when you are carried thro the rest which is finished you wonder that any of the owners cou'd think of adding more Appartments. The third Day brought us safe to Cambridge, I believe well satisfied with our Expedition.

"Today a party of us go over to dine with Green, tomorrow Lord Lincoln, Cornwallis and some more of our Beaux Esprits follow our traces to Stamford. Mr. Colson our new Lucasian Professor was elected by the Heads in town at the theatre last Monday, the Dispute lay between him and Roger Long, Dr. Bentley, Dr. Richardson, Dr. Ashton, Dr. Hubbard and Dr. Long himself were his party, on the other side appeared Dr Adams, old Towers, Dr. Newcome, the Vice Chancellor and the Master of Queens whose address carried the election in Colson's favour. De Moivre prudently declined the being a Candidate for if either He and Colson had stood together or he separate Dr Long would certainly have carried it. I believe it is reckoned they have made a very proper choice and after this long letter nothing remains but to send the compliments of all your friends and to wish 1st. that you may be able to read this scrawl and 2nd that it may give you a few Minutes entertainment.

"I am yours affectionately
"P. YORKE.

"Desire Mr Lawry to philosophize away with all speed."

Roger Long and Dr. Bentley were respectively Masters of Pembroke and Trinity, and the strife which waged between them was no less classical than that of Hector and Achilles beneath the Walls of Troy.

Abraham de Moivre, a Huguenot and mathematician, came to England in 1688; and in 1699 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, and helped to decide the famous contest between Newton and Leibnitz on the merit of the invention of fluxions.

"Carshalton,
"*Sept.* 12, 1739.

"Dear Sir,

"I am at all times glad to hear of your health and therefore your letter could not but be very agreable to me amidst my Reveries and Speculations in the Shades of these Gardens. It naturally brought to my mind the remembrance of past pleasures in your Company and made me wish we were not so far distant from one another. You speak with raptures of your meditations in a calm Evening on the side of some purling stream, there is a walk here, where I often exercise the contemplative faculty. It is in the middle of a winding Grove, part of it lies on a gentle rise—surrounded on all sides with lofty elms, and a bank of flowring Shrubs terminated by a gentle Cascade and a statue of Minerva. The Birds join with the gentle murmurs of the Water in forming a concert whch has a natural wildness in it that pleases extreamely. You may guess how agreable a Companion Horace is between the foot of some tree in this sweet retirement. Sometimes I take a Spectator in my Pocket; at other times Pope entertains me, and not unfrequently I plan a "Philosopher" or a Letter to a

Friend. If I was in love (which, thank God, I am not,) I should certainly pen a Sonnet to Celia or Cloe. Craftsmen Gazetiers and Political Pamplets never enter the solitude, or any other thoughts but those of Repose and Tranquility. I often cry out with poet Martial 'Hoc nemus, hi fontes, haec textilis umbra supini Palmitis, hoc riguae ductile flumen aquae etc.' This has been a very pleasant vacation to me, I took an expedition with my Lord to Portsmouth and saw the Docks and ships of War lying there. It is certainly a Noble sight as well for the Variety as for the novelty of the Entertainment—you meet with the Dock where the Ships are fitted out, and round which the Naval Offices lye, contains 60 Acres of Ground, and no less than 1400 Workmen are constantly employed there.—The Naval Stores are ranged under their respective heads with the utmost exactness, the Furniture of every Ship laid up in separate Divisions, the Name and size of the ship marked on a Board over the compartment where the equipage is laid up. We went on Board the Princess Caroline at Spithead, a 3rd Rate Man of War with 90 Guns and 500 men. Such a Machine is the finest spectacle in the World, and both that and the view of the great Ocean suggest a variety of entertaining Reflections.

" As to Politicks, no doubt you have seen the King of Spain's Manifesto and think it like all the rest of the world a foolish peice. The Parliament meet in November to provide early supplies : the various reports are spread about concerning a Bullying Message brought by the French Embassador but I can assure you in good authority there is nothing in them.

" Pray when you see Mr Newcome make my Compliments to him. I hope his Stock of Sermons encreases daily and that he does not find the comments of Divines make him forget his facetious Stories. My Brother is

your humble Servant; and for myself I have been long your obedient

"P. YORKE.

"Excuse this hasty incorrect scribble."

"St James' Square,
"*June the 7th*, 1740.

"DEAR SIR,

"In the hurry and flutter of business occasioned by the Duke of Kent's Death, which happened on Thursday night, I have but just time to thank you for your kind Congratulations, and to assure you that the obliging Assurances You give me of your friendship and good wishes for my prosperity in life affect me very sensibly as they come from one Whose benevolence and sincerity are unquestionable.

"Ever since I had the pleasure of your Acquaintance I have set that value upon it which it deserves, and I shall always endeavor to preserve it by that course of life which I know can alone give a just Claim to be a virtuous and honorable one.

"I am sorry you put your self to the trouble of making any Apology in Mr. Gilbert's Affair, I should have been very glad to have served him if It had been in my power, because I am sensible that to do an Act of Kindness to a friend of yours is the same as doing one for your self.

"When I see you in Town I shall talk over with you this sudden turn which the Course of my Affairs has taken, as far above my Expectations as merits; In the mean time I think I hear everybody [ ] me . . .

"I am dear Sir John, very truly yours, etc.

"PHILIP YORKE."

The prudence which had distinguished Simon in youth, remained a more fitting attribute in middle-age; "Chi va piano va sano" might have been his motto, and it certainly was his rule of life. Four unmarked years added silently to their forerunners in the closing book of Time, while Simon, the silent, thought over his friends' advice, got tired of his lonely home and removed from himself "the scurvy reproach of an old bachelor." There are no reminiscences of the courtship, hardly a romantic one, between this prosaic middle-aged gentleman and his nineteen-year-old bride. After the marriage, which took place in the Spring of 1739, they did not at once return to Erthig, but lingered on, perhaps in the bride's home, for Dorothy, daughter of Matthew Hutton (of Newnham, Hertfordshire) was much attached to her own relations. When they did at last make a public entry into their domain it was amid the general acclamation of interested neighbours, one of whom, Mrs. Myddleton of Crossnwydd, has left an account.

Copy of a letter given to the late Mrs Simon Yorke

"Cross newydd,
"*May the 25th*, 1740.

"Sir,

"I return you thanks in the first place for the favour of your letter. I likewise thank you for the printed paper you were pleased to enclose to me. Last Tuesday Mr Yorke made his publick Entry into Wales. I call it soe because he wrote into the country he should be pleas'd that his friends and well wishers should meet him. As soon as I heard it I took the liberty, which I hope you will not disaprove, of letting Mr Reece know

it. I believe Mr Price and your Friends came time enough to pay their compliments upon the occasion. Mr Yorke has been so very long known in this part of the world that there was noe particular observation made upon him, for everybody's eyes was fixed and all their attention upon his young Bride, who acquited herself soe well at that time (in her) then publick station that she has gained the Applause of everybody. She drove very slow through the town and took a respectful and proper note of everybody who shew'd her any regard from the highest Rank to the lowest. I shall wait on her this week and hope to find her an agreable neighbour as I expect from the character I have heard of her.

" I am, Sir your obliged Humble Servant

" M Myddleton."

An interesting description of Newnham, the country seat of Matthew Hutton, father-in-law of Simon Yorke, has recently been published. By that it would appear that even before the Doomsday Commission the Manor of Newenhaeme was the property of the Abbey of St. Albans. Confirmed in its possession by Kings and Popes, it was torn from them by the sacrilegious decrees of Henry VIII, who bestowed it on Ralph Rowlett, High Sheriff of the County. From Rowlett it passed to Skipwith, both owners dying without male heirs. James Dowman, its next possessor, was succeeded by various members of the Hale family, from whom in 1678 Sir William Dyer purchased the estate. His son, also William, built for himself a very fair house, choosing for its foundations the ruins of a moated Manor house built in the year 1470 by the cellarer of the Abbey. It was in 1717, or about the time that John Meller entered into

MAJOLICA DISHES. TOP LEFT-HAND PIECE MARKED "1543 SCAMPO DI CA MILLAM URBIN P."

possession at Erthig Hall, that Newnham Manor became the residence of Matthew Hutton. But on Hutton fell the curse so commonly attendant on the owners of stolen church lands; his sons Matthew and James died unmarried. His grandson Philip Yorke coming into the estate on the distaff side rarely visited it: he removed all that was most valuable within and without doors, and in the year 1806 his son sold the place to its present owner.

There is no portrait of Dorothy; only in imagination can she be seen moving softly about Erthig Hall amid Meller's handsome, sombre furniture. Washing the china with her own dainty fingers, gathering roses along the sunny garden walks, lonely sometimes, missing her mother's caresses and her brother's cheery companionship, four years elapsed before a little son came to be a pet and plaything to the loving gentle girl. It may well be supposed how the congratulations poured in at this longed for and long expected event.

Congratulations on the birth of Philip Yorke

"Chester,
"30*th July*, 1743.

"Dear Sir,

"With the number of your friends who truly rejoice with you and Mrs Yorke upon the Birth of your son, I beg to be admitted, though I got here early this morning, the news was received before me; and while we were round Mrs Lloyd's Breakfast Table, Mr Woolfe confirmed our joy. We propose to be with you on Tuesday by noon. We intend to come in my Charriot to Trivallin, and must beg your assistance to convey us

from thence and that you will let your Coach be there at eleven.

"I beg my Compliments to Mrs Yorke and Mrs Hutton and to Mrs Mainwaring and yourself.

"I am, Dear Sir, A most affectionate and obedient servant,

"C. MAINWARING."

It would be interesting to know whether the following letters copied by the London barrister for his country friend are to be found in any other records, public or private.* In 1743 Carteret, an inveterate enemy of the Bourbon house, directed the foreign policy of the Whig party. George II held the same opinions as his minister, and in command of an allied army of 40,000 men gave battle to a superior French force on the bank of the Main. The situation (a precarious one) was saved for England by the reckless impetuosity of the French cavalry. It was not a great battle, but it produced far reaching results, and is memorable in English history as the last occasion that the reigning monarch himself took the field.

RICHARD WOOLFE *to* SIMON YORKE

"Lincolns Inn,

"*June 26th*, 1743.

"DEAR SIR,

"You will before you recieve this have seen Lord Carteret's Letter. I here send you Copy's of Two which came at the same time, the one from the Duke of Richmond, wrote the day of the Battle, and the other from an Officer, wrote the day after. By a letter from Ranby to

* Horace Walpole gives very much the same description of this battle.—Sir H. Mann, Letter 119.

Dr Wilmot, he has 150 french Officers of Distinction under his Care. It is sayed the King harrangued the Troops before they engaged, and Rode during the Action from one Battalion to another; and in the March and during the Action, was Eleaven hours on Horseback was close to the Duke d'Aremburgh when he was wounded, and Clayton was killed just as he had received some Order from the King. The french were severall thousand more than the Allyes, had the Advantage of Ground, and were the flower of their Army. Our Horse only stood the Brunt for a long while before any of the Foot could come up. The Horse being under a necessity to out-march them in order to prevent the Designs of the French, and consequently great loss amongst them. I do not hear for certain that a further Express is come, but I will send you to Night's Gazett if it comes out in time. It's say'd the Emperor has entirely abandoned the French, is come to Ratisborn and put himself under the protection of our King and his Allys; And that there has been a battle in Italy, wherein the Spaniards were entirely defeated and that thereupon the Duke of Modena, their General, laid violent hands upon himself; but these two great events want confirmation. The Royall Standard of the French Household and belonging to the Gens d'Armes is taken, which never before was lost.

"Beleive me to be Dear Sir sincerely

"R W:"

"The King is well, and I am well, and all our friends are well. Lord Albemarle had a horse shot under him. The Duke is wounded in the leg, but in no Sort of danger. Poor General Clayton is killed, and Phill Honeywood * wounded dangerously in many places. The French were 25000. We gained a compleat Victory,

* Sir Philip Honeywood, K.C.B.

and 15 Regiments of our Foot and 3000 Dragoons are now pursuing them. They calculate about 7000 French and 2000 of our people killed. The King was in the hottest of the Battle.

"The French attack'd us yesterday morning at 8 between Aschaffenburgh and Dettengen but after a brave defence; We drove them in the evening full Galop through the River. We have destroyed their Gens d'Armes and made several of them prisoners viz. Two General Officers and others, 2 Cannon, 2 Standards, etc. The Feight held 6 hours, desperate both that and the pursuit. Our loss however is not very great by death, though it is by the wounded. General Clayton was shot dead and found stript. Major Honeywood is killed. The Duke of Cumberland is shot through the leg. Brigadier Husk is shot through the heal. Collonel Legonier is in a bad way with two shots. The blew horse Guards have been terribly mauled, as have Hawly's and Bland's Regiments. The Scotch Greys began, and all the English shewed the Allies the part of men. Monsieur de Fenelon's Son was much sabierd in the head and taken prisoner. He says Marshall Noiailles is dangerously and severely wounded. Lord Albemarle had a horse shot under him, so had most of the General Officers. Lieutenant General Campbell pursued with the Greys and about 3000 Horse, and made great havock. The Field of Battle was glorious for us, and the day our own, but the Spectacle of the Dead and Cryes of the wounded terrible. The Hessians and 8 Hanoverian Regiments were not enough come up, and are now about a league from us. Duke d'Aremburgh Recieved a Wound from a Musket Shot in the breast. The King escaped tho' he put himself in great danger.

"There was no express come at 3 this afternoon; These printed letters will, I suppose, be as good an account as the Gazet can give of the first Express."

II

The years that passed by so peacefully for Simon and Dorothy were years of public and political agitation, and even to their quiet country home the arrival of the post brought disturbing echoes of invasion and civil war. On August 2, 1745, Charles Edward, the young "Pretender," (grandson of James the II) landed in Scotland, and a few weeks later was advancing towards London at the head of an army. A panic spread through the country side, no one knew where he would appear next, and wild tales of the atrocities perpetrated by his undisciplined hosts caused a packing up of treasures, and a general exodus at every false alarm of his approach. Many generations had passed away since a foreign foe had landed on these shores, and even the grandparents of that present generation could not remember a time when men fell in defence of their own firesides and women and children fled for shelter to woods and commons. This is perhaps the reason of the lamentable want of patriotism which now pervades all classes : they do not know the meaning of war, the horror of it, nor recognize as they should do the sacred duty of every citizen to qualify for the defence of his country in case of a possible invasion.

What people at York and Chester thought and talked about in the eventful year of 1745 may be read here, and the Huttons became anxious for the safety of their relations in Wales.

" 28 *November*, 1745.

" Dear Sir,

" I begin to be in concern for you and family on Account of the Rebells but from the best Intelligence I can get I hope they will not be able to reach Wales, however I dont in the least doubt from your prudence and good Judgement but that you will take all precaution in case they shou'd. If you shou'd think it advisable to come Southward as far as us you can surely want no Invitation. We should all, I dare say, rejoice to see you and I dont doubt but my Mother has menconed it to you. If not, I am sure it proceeds from not knowing the Danger you are in. I have it from good authority that the Rebels have dwindled to about [ ]000 fighting men which compared to Ligoniers army is but a handful of men ; Judge Reynolds assured me today he will have 2000 old disciplined troops with 3 Batalions of the Guards at the head of them, besides the new raised Regiments. He thinks they cannot get by him into Wales. Warrington Bridge is broke down which Mr Perkins tells me will retard the march of the Rebels two days. I saw a Letter this Day from Penrith which gives an Account that the Rebels are Drawing their Baggage back to Carlisle and it is supposed from thence they are about to retreat.

" You have seen the Account of the Privateer taken by the Sheerness Man of War, we have no particulars yet of the persons on board, but it is generally thought the 2nd son of the Pretender is One of them. The worst piece of news in Town, I think at present is that the Government cannot raise money for present Service at the rate it hath done of late years. I am told the moneyed people insist upon 4½ p.c. which shou'd they prevail in it will be fixing the Interest the Government must pay for all the money they want to raise this year ; and will be a great detriment to the present proprietors

of the present funds, and annihilate part of Our fortunes. Another thing, all trade is cloged, and a good deal at a Stand, and no money to be got but a Little Silver. Jimmy joins with me in love to Mrs Yorke and my Dear little Nephew and Godson.

"I am, your affectionate

"MATTHEW HUTTON."

There is no clue to the initial signed letter directed to Sir Henry Marsham, M.P.

"At St Mary's Hill London."

and it was most likely sent on to Simon by some mutual friend.

"*Dec.* 1, 1745.

"If God is pleas'd to send us such tryals we must bear it, but I would not purchase all the honours and riches of the world, by undergoing such another day and night as I did from Sat' noon till Sunday morn 7 a'clock. on satur' noon 3 expresses came in to let Lord Mayor (and one to the Dean) know the Rebels were turned back into Yorkshire, woud be at York on monday, all faces gathered blackness, indeed people run about the streets crying 'We are ruined,' and we who had not packed began to secure a few of our best effects, every coach in York was hired to carry the women out of present danger. I had share with a family of a coach and a waggon for Hull, and so over Humber, but after all the hurry I am here still, for sunday morning we received an express that it was but part of the Rebels who were come as far as Rochdale, for to plunder, and get horses, and turned back to Manchester again. General Oglethorps foot came on yesterday evening and are still comeing in, a few horse came and we expect part of Wades tomorrow, but I who do not understand the art of warr as well as I do

the principles of the Welsh fear that they will get into Wales: if they do [not] it is thought that this neighbourhood will be the seat of war.

"At least 20 coaches and 6 went out yesterday morning with 7 or 8 people in each but today we are quiet.

"We have clapt a phisician into the Castle who has been in the 'pretenders' camp, his name Burton. I dont love to give Characters of people but we always say He is a fool who hangs himself and he is said to have confessed more than He need. The gates are double guarded every night. Pray write me a line. Yours in an hurry.

"J. B."

The writer of this letter was evidently in a terrible panic; but not so the good citizens of York, who had long been preparing for such a contingency. They had raised subscriptions, collected arms, enrolled volunteers, and repaired the City walls. The four companies formed at this time called officially "Independants," popularly "the Blues," remained under arms the best part of a year, until the rebellion having spent its force they were gradually disbanded.

"Whitehall,
"*Feb. 6th*, 1746.

"Dear Sir,

"It is with the greatest satisfaction that I congratulate you upon the good News contained in the Gazettes which I take the Liberty of sending you inclosed.

"Miss Jenny Cameron who has very frequently been mentioned in the News Papers as a Lady of Spirit and

Gallantry and in high Favor with the Young Pretender has been taken Prisoner by the Kings troops.

"I beg Mrs Yorke will do me the Favor to accept of my Compliments, and am with great truth and Regard,

"Dear Sir,

"Yours,

"H. V. Jones."

Extract—Elizabeth Lawry *on the Jacobites*

"*May 3rd*, 1746.

"I will adone with this dull subject (her ill health) and congratulate you on the success God Almighty has given us against the Rebels and I hope they may be so thoroughly routed out, that we may have no more of the same over again. The publick in this Town all over and the Square in particular was what I never saw before every house light up except 4 or 5 on all sides of the Square, which made a fine appearance. Your neighbour Mr Robert William at Wrexham which is in a house by Chancery Lane had his windows well broke for not complying to get out a light which I own I was heartily glad to hear as I find the wife is a violent Jacobite and said if it lost her twenty shillings she would not comply to do it. [ ] as I am informed lost little less the mending what winder was broken and his Brother Watkin was more wise and gave a crown to the Mob to secure his windows."

Dr. William Cowper *to* Simon Yorke

(Probably 1746.)

"*April* 24.

"Good Sir,

"I hope Mr Lee had my epistle dated Monday evening:—Mr Mayor of Liverpool, altered his mind, and did not swear the Servitude-men but went on with

the Poll all Monday afternoon, when He returned Mr Hardman and Mr Salusbury, the latter by a majority of between 160 and 170.—Mr Lawson tells me, that Mr Lloyd himself arrived there on Monday.—Mr Lloyds Folks did not regard the Mayor's concluding, but continued to poll the Claimants of Freedom to the number of above 400, and this with the advice of Mr Fazakerly who is likewise of Opinion that these have good Actions against the Mayor. Young Mr Blundell of Ince, told me that he was upon the Scaffolds with them; till near eleven on Monday-night whilst they were polling these Pretenders. Tom Farrell says that there was such mobbing that the Mayor was obliged to be secreted for above two hours in an Ale House. I told him, that I had heard that it was in a [ ] House, which angered my Inteligencer not a little. Tom is exceedingly exasperated at George Clarke and Preb Mainwaring, for what the One did, and the Other did not do at Liverpool.

"Yesterday Morning the late Baron's quondam friends attended again the Grovenor Cavalcade about Chester.

Hos Nam Fata Deum adjungunt socios comitesque
Jacobitis; faciuntque omnes uno ore Devanos.

Upon the account of this most extraordinary Coalition, Tis thought that Jack Hunt will be a Boarder with Stephen Hyde's Dowager, before the Allies have finish'd their perambulations.

"Mr Knight of Liverpool says that including the Claimants (for it seemes both sides polld such) Mr Lloyd has a Majority of 203. Sir L Cotton, in the Cocker's language says, they are now only up on the Bye: battles, but that the Main is to be fought in the House of Commons.—'Tis now certain, that He, the very Mr Lloyd, did actually arrive yesterday morning, and that there were, on that occasion such acclamations (among

the Neutrum modo Mes modo Vulgus) and such demonstrations of Joy, as Liverpool never before experienced, and especially, as he has given them all, the strongest assurances that he will carry on this Matter to the very utmost. A now Cambrian Senator tells me, that Mr Fox will most strenuously befriend his Deputy, and that he has a mortal aversion to all out-lying voters—so that a very fine Petition Contest seems to be fairly plann'd out Weñsday afternoon 3 a'clock.

"One Mr Bagnall of Bromboro' assures me, that notwithstanding the Mayor's closing the Books upon Monday, and the Poll continuing to near eleven that night, yet they kept polling on yesterday, and that He himself voted at 3 yester afternoon, and that they were going on when he came away.—Now I think I have given you enough of Liverpool.—Two good Heats yesterday, the second especially, Mr Richard Williams little Horse barely won his Master the Punch Bowl. He starts again on Fryday Much Company in Town, but a very great Congress of the Catholicks; and 'tis rumour'd (tho' perhaps without Foundation) that there is likewise (incog to be sure) a tall handsome Personage who delighted some but made numbers very uneasy. Anno Dni 1745.

"They are moving towards the Course, so I shall only add my best respects to Mrs Yorke yourself and guests, and that I am Sir your very humble servant,

"William Cowper.

"Two Watergate; Street Merchants vying who shall out-treat the other."

While it may fairly be said that all through this correspondence the most brilliant, the most agreeable writers are of the legal profession, an exception must be made for Mr. Lawry who had imbibed "the good

scholarship of Westminster school without the contamination of its wickedness," and on leaving College became in due course Rector of Lee and Prebendary of Rochester.

Extract—Elizabeth Lawry

"*Sept.* 29.

"My son was much delighted with his tour to Oxford with Mr. Sawyer and thinks it far exceeds Cambridge in most things, the four days he was there he lost no time in making a thro'w inspection into all he could see, and has taken a draught of the Southwest back part of the town in his last evening walk by the River, before he left that place; he also took a particular survey of Blenheim House,* so far as an illnatured housekeeper would permit which he admired for the situation and Grander of its Building."

Lawry was of the same opinion as Defoe, who comparing the Universities aptly remarks "Oxford has several things as a University which Cambridge has not."

Elizabeth Lawry *to* Simon Yorke

"*August the* 14^{h}, 1746.

"Dear Brother,

"I am informed you will have a visiter soon from London, Mr Charles Yorke, I write this to give you the reasons why my Son doe not accompany him, being myself in some measure the occasion of preventing it. In the first place he was in a very declining state of health all the last Spring, and he then found these short journeys

* Horace Walpole, who visited Blenheim ten years earlier, had the same experience in May 1736. He writes thus: "I forgot to tell you I was at Blenheim where I saw nothing but a cross housekeeper. . . ."

he took to and from Rochester ; to Lee and London, did much to impair his health, and tho' I thank God he is well recover'd, yet he feare so long a journey will be too much for him till his health is better Established. My next reason is, my Mother has been much out of order for some time past, and has been under Mr Bradberry's care since she came from Lee. Her disorder is a feaver upon her spirrits which has very much sunk her. I hope she is something better ; but being so advanced in Life, we dont know what sudden alteration may happen, therfore I could not beare the thought of my sonn goeing so far from us. These two reasons, I believe, you will think very Material, whatever Mr Charles Yorke may think of the matter, as he seem'd not well pleased when my son declin'd going with him. I hope this will find you all well, as I thank God, Lee has quite recover'd my Health, though it had not the same Good Effect upon my Mother. The air is certainly very Good, though believe it was too sharp for her. She is now Enter'd into her 88 year of her age yesterday being her birthday. She is very full of complaints. God knows whether she will live to see another tho' when she fall into discourse upon the Jacobite popish crew, she seems in high spirits, and full of all their villany that has been working among them in her time, which she remembers better than most other things as her memerry is much gon off since you saw her last, and her hearing is very bad, tho' she retains her reason perfectly well when she heare what is said.

" She joyns with me in kind love and service to you and my sister.

" I am, your loving sister,

" E. Lawry.

" My Son gives his Duty, and supposes you had his last letter."

How prosaic is the modern style of history entirely concerned with politics and social reforms, with never a corner to spare for adventure or romance! Turn up the pages of a Students' Manual, and three lines alone are given by which to explain the following extracts, selected at random from the Woolfe records. The terror inspired by the Scotch invasion, especially in Chester and York, has already been told in various letters, and the sequel is well known. The undisciplined rabble that followed the fortunes of the exiled Stewarts could not stand up against the trained forces and heavy guns of the butcher Cumberland, and they were defeated at Culloden with great slaughter. Charles escaped, but many of his followers were hanged, and three Scotch Lords, Lovat, Balmerino, and Kilmarnock brought to the block.

Extracts—Richard Woolfe *to* Simon Yorke.

"*June* 28, 1746.

"The Tryalls of the Rebell Lords are now fixed for the 28th of July by Indictment, and the Tryall to be in Westminster Hall and all Peers to be summoned. It is said two of them will Plead Guilty. But Lord Cromarty pretends not to have been in Arms Lord Lovatt is certainly taken."

P.S. from the same letter.

"The Captain of the Man-of-Warr which brought the Marquis of Tulibardine from Scotland. He dined at the Captain's Table and on the 10th of June after Dinner he filled a Bumper and drank to the only honest Englishman who was born on that Day. The Captain thereupon ordered him into the Ship's Hold among the Common Rebells where he continued till he got to Towne."

"Lincolne Inn,

"*April the 9th*, 1747.

"A gentleman of this Inn was at the Tower this morning Who heard old Lovat * as he past a Young woman in one of the Rooms aske the Officer if he would not permit him to give her a kiss. The Officer gave a very proper rebuke so that he contented himself by saying he hoped he would not prevent him from, and he accordingly did say, to her He wish't her well. The gentleman says that when the Old man arrived upon the Stage he set himself down in a chair about 12 minutes befor he layd his head to the Block, I do not hear that he read any paper to the Spectators or made them any Speech save that he sayd about 500 years ago an Ancestor of his was there Beheaded. that He dyed a Catholick of the Jansenite perswasiun. I hear that several persons have lost their lives by the fall of a scaffold, and great numbers much hurt."

Very seldom was Dorothy absent from her husband during the twenty-eight years of their married life, but in January 1747 she went on a visit to a (Shropshire ?) neighbour, Mrs Mainwaring, who figures frequently in the correspondence, this perhaps but as a stepping stone to a longer journey, for in March of the same year she is writing from her old home. Her father was dead, but her mother, stout and cheerful in spite of ill health, lived on there with her companion, Catherine Lally, enlivened

* Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, was a man of parts, but of infamous character. Horace Walpole's description of the scene on the scaffold is almost identical with that of Woolfe, though neither one nor the other was actually present. A scaffold fell and killed several persons, including a man who had ridden from Salisbury on purpose to see the ceremony; and a woman who was taken up dead with a live child in her arms. See Letters to Sir Horace Mann, 246.

from time to time by the presence of her sons, Matthew and James.

DOROTHY YORKE *to her husband* SIMON

"*January 9th*, 1747.

"MY DEAR,

"It is a great pleasure to me to hear of Yours, and Phill's Health. I am concerned I've omited writeing as I find you have expected a Letter the B—n being gone to London I thought I had no perticular subject to write on. My reception was kind but I find poor Mrs Mainwaring's mind much embarassed on the present occasion and Oppress'd with fears, tho' all their friends are in very great spirits and doubt not of success, civility passes between all partys. I do not Observe any alterations in private chat resentments are expres'd and a certain acquaintance of ours near this house in high disgrace with many. I do not repent my comeing. I hope it will not be long before I have the pleasure of seeing you here which will be a satisfaction to your affectionate

"D. YORKE."

"*March 6th*, 1747.

"MY DEAR,

"I would have wrote to You on my Journey had I not met travellers for Chester who I know would mention us. I have had a very agreable safe journey hither. Miss Jones was a very entertaining Companion and was so good as to read most of the way, when on the road to me. I find my friends here well, wishing much they cou'd have seen you and Phill. I left him quite hearty and in better temper than I ever see him, not withstanding he was prodigiously rejoiced when he first see me and thought I was to stay at home.

"My Mama tells me she had answered your last letter concerning the coach. All from here Joyne with me in

affectionate remembrance towards you. Pray make Compliments to every person where due, as if named, with thanks to Mrs Wilbraham for her Cakes and likewise to Miss for her letter which struck a damp to my spirits as it was [ ] of her.

" I am, my Dear Yours affectionately,

" D. YORKE.

" PS How do's poor dear Mrs Mainwaring's lymping Jockey I think to keep some days to rest."

" *March* 19*th*, 1747.

" Was I not well assured, my dear Mr Yorke has a Pleasure in hearing from me, I should be tempted to fling down my pen for want of an amusing subject to write on. We lead here a Monastick life which is to end in a weeks' time by promise from my Brother Hutton of a sight of him, urgent business has hitherto detained him. James will come as soon as he possibly can. The Post after I got here I received a complaisant letter from Mrs Perkins with a very pressing invitation to her house, the little while I shall be in Town. Mamma would have me accept of it as she so often returns it to them. My Mother seems well and cheerful, has a hearty stomach, and grows very fatt which she does not care to hear She use's no exercise, nor indeed has she an opportunity for it from the badnes of the fields. It gives me concern to find she leads so Sedentary a life. She desires her kindest Respects to You, Mrs Lally her Service; her Health worse than it was Three Years ago, scarcely a day passes with her without Complaints, wretched weather, I hope you will not quit your present abode till better. I've no further account of a certain Welch Orphan dear little Phil. I was in hopes of a Line from Caesar Yesterday. William went from hence last Wednesday, proposed reaching home as today. Pay my best compliments

to our friend Mr Lloyd. Mama's likewise waits on him. Dispose of my service where due and especially to Parlour chums.

" Your affectionately,
" D. Yorke."

" *March* 31.

" My Dear,

" You are very good in giveing me the pleasure of hearing from you when absent. I do assure you it is the greatest I have without the least flattery. I am far from being happy when parted from you, am rejoiced Phil is in good spirits and health and it will be a thro': joy to me when we meet again at Erthig. My Brothers came here on Monday, propose staying near 3 weeks, they are very well and particular in their inquirys after you and there Nephew with there kindest Compliments to both. I can't say but I shall be glad to see London tho I shall go with reluctance to the place I'm invited. I forgot to mention in My last. The improvements made here, the row of trees down before the house and several others with hedges that has made it vastly more lively. My mama complains of the expense which is like to be heighten'd when it comes to be lay'd out in form. I fear she will not care for traveling [ ] but she tells me, she is not able to bear fatigue of a journey. Have you seen Bob Finch's preferment in the papers— Chaplain to Guis Hospital, 100 and £20 a year with a good house. We have been vastly shocked with your account of the fire in the city. Just before I had a letter from Miss Jones who I find has all the amusements town can afford. indeed she deserves it as she is so entertaining to others.

" I suppose Mr Tom Lee packed up the ballad while tea was on the board but I thank him for haveing even thought of me I wish poor Mrs Mainwaring may never

have a sight of it. I am glad to hear her consort has recovered his spirits. I hope affairs are not quite so bad as apprehended, quite a different notion prevails in town."

MRS. HUTTON *to her son-in-law* SIMON YORKE

"*27th October*, 1747.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your tenderness of expression as to Mrs Yorkes Illness am truly thankful for. Every Body that is a parent knows the Affection of Another, nothing but Infirmities added to the length of the Journey, prevents my coming to Erthigg.

"I am heartily grieved my Daughter has such Ill Health; Shall be full of Expectation of hearing next post that she is recover'd, which I most Earnestly Wish for. Fancy her sons disorder has been greatly the Occasion of hers. I rejoice my Dear little Grandson has got over the Measles, wish he may do the same with the Small Pox before he leaves home. My sincere love to Dear Dolly, Yourself and Son,

"I am, Sir,

"Your affectionate Mother,

"BARBARA HUTTON.

"Kitty Desiers her service with good wishes. My Sons are at London."

"*May* 19, 1747.

"DEAR SIR,

"I thankfully acknowledge the favour of yors, it was shewing true regard, as You know the affection of a Parent. Dolly's being better will add strength and Health to me. I am greatly recover'd. This is the first Letter I have wrote, I hope soon to have one from my Daughter.

"My Service to Mrs Lloyd who I think a valuable

Neighbour, being so good an Assistant in time of Sickness. I am glad your Dear little Boy is so well: Do not doubt his behavior being good from both your Instructions.

"My Love with Kitty's Service attends Mrs Yorke and your self. I am Sir your affectionate Mother and Humble Servant

"B. Hutton."

In March 1747 Dorothy writing from Newnham had told her husband of a pressing invitation to stay with Mrs. Perkins in London, an invitation which she evidently intended to accept. But something intervened. Phil developed the measles, and perhaps that was the cause, and she went home to nurse him and fell ill herself; at least this is what may be inferred from her mother's letters written in the autumn of that year. In the April of 1748 she announced her arrival in the metropolis, though she does not mention the house from which she writes. Charles Wymondesold, whose prospective marriage is the substance of the postscript, was the son of one of Simon's most staunch friends; and the tragedy which overwhelmed him, of which echoes reappear from time to time in the correspondence, is first foreshadowed in his father's forebodings concerning the connection of which he evidently disapproved.

"*Thursday morning—April* 26, 1748.

"My Dear ——

"I have been in London a week this day. I would have given myself the pleasure of writing before, but wanted to be informed of the weding at Powis House.

Lord Anson * and Miss Yorke were married last night at 7 and Mr Perkins is now dressing out to wait on them. I was to pay my Compliments to Lady Hardwicke on Sunday. Had not heard from any part of the Family except Mr Charles who called 2 or 3 days ago on me. I was not at Home. I understand the above affare has imployed there whole thoughts. I can't learn what settlements, but Mr Perkins assures me not so large as you would imagine. Not beyond what her fortune deserves which is 12 Thousand pound; will pay my devoirs again, when I am told it is proper.

"On Wednesday I was in Bloomsbury Square and found Mrs Yorke and your sister very well, the old Lady so intirely deaf that I could not make her hear my voice. Your Nephew and Niece at Lea where she intends to lye inn. I see him a Saturday much hurryed with frequent journeys, and I think looks thin.

"My affectionate wishes attends you and my dear Boy with service to all Friends.

"I am, my dear, yours to command,

"D. Yorke.

"The' family compliments wait on You. They are civiler than usual to me."

"Charles Wymondesole is soon to be married to Miss Knight, who is a great beauty and he is excessively in Love."

"Dear Sir,

"I am obliged to you for your kind wishes to me and Family on my son's marriage, to avoid news papers and other ceremonial inconveniences I retired here for sometime. I must confess to an old Friend the alliance was not desirable by me but not having forgot the force

* Lord Anson married on April 25, 1748, Ladv Elizabeth Yorke, eldest daughter of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke.

of Love I could not help gratifying my son on his choice. Frank to, who was an earnest solicitor in the affair. Mrs. Wymondesold is very good humoured and has good sense and as my son is sober and possessed of other qualityes requisite in marriage state and as I believe the principal ingredient on both sides was Love I hope well.

"Your faith humble servant
"MATTHEW WYMONDESOLD.

"Lockinge,
"*Aug.* 13, 1748."

Extract—RICHARD WOOLFE *to* SIMON YORKE.

"Lincoln's Inn,
"*May* 24, 1748.

"DEAR SIR,

"I was very much pleased this morning with your Nephew's account of your arrival at Erthig and the agreableness of your journey, and doubt not but Mrs Yorke has already framed to herself a good idea of Wales, but am fully persuaded on further acquaintance she will find the place answer beyond her expectations.

"Your kins-man's Marriage Articles * were signed and the License taken out on Monday last and the Duke (pleased at being an eye-witness of the Nuptials) desired the young gentleman would be ready when he should send, which the Duke signifying on Thursday last, the Espousals were that day performed in His Grace's Bed-chamber. But the whole of that grand affair is not yet

* This was the marriage of Philip Yorke, son of the Chancellor, to the Hon. Jemima Campbell, daughter of George Campbell, Lord Glenorchy, grand-daughter and heiress, through her mother, of Henry Gray, last Duke of Kent. The marriage was hurried on on account of the Duke's failing health, and took place in his house at Brompton, May 22, 1740. "The Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke," by Philip Chesney Yorke, vol. i, p. 210.

compleated, for Mr Yorke is still solus at Powis House, the reason of which I take to be the Duke's very weak condition, and upon which account the usual compliments of all Friends are not yet to be paid. I hear my Lord Chancellor sent to a great Officer of the Mint for forty five-pound pieces; but neither the Mint or Banke could make the supply; so that one hundred shineing new two-guinea pieces composed the Lady's Dowry-purse. Sure there never was more universal gladness to a Family's alliance than this gives, and I take this opportunity of congratulating you upon it, and I hope that it did not proceed from the knowledge the young ones had of each other, yet that it will prove a happy conjunction.

"I delivered your Print to Mr Perkins, who says he ought to have one for Mill Hill, and the other for Towne. I have lately been twice in Serle's, and then thought I remained still a culprit with the Lady, but since I begun this Letter, have had a Message of Invitation from the Secretary to Mill Hill next week. 'Tis expected the King landed in Holland last night or this morning, and yesterday Master Eld set forward on his Travels, and would, I suppose, embark at Dover for Calais. He was sick of his expedition before he set out, and would have declined it, but that he had made a very large deposite. However, he has took prudent care to get part of his expences by wagering he would performe his engagement. His Brother Sawyer's Travels, I think, will be confined at least for these Holidays, within their usual bounds. Last night Mrs Delme (formerly Miss Shaw) died of the Small-pox; she was esteemed very pretty. Mr. Wymondesold goes for Berkshire on Monday, where he proposes to continue the remaining part of the summer. There is no material publick news. I'm just going to Fauxhall with the Duke, and Will. Edwards, it being an exceedingly fine evening, so shall no longer detaine you or myself . . . ."

The year 1748 brought to a temporary conclusion the war with France; by the signing of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle France agreed to recognize the succession of Maria Theresa to the throne of Austria, and all conquests were restored on both sides. This peace gave but little satisfaction, and proved itself but a temporary truce before renewed hostilities. Simon's letters, those at least which have survived, (for it must never be forgotten that, except in a few instances, there has been no conscious attempt to preserve continuously the miscellaneous correspondence), are of the kind vulgarly known as "Board and Lodging," thanks returned for hospitality bestowed. Mr. Grove, hereafter the writer of mere dry business epistles, is amusing with his apology for his indecorous behaviour. Perhaps Sir Harry Bunbury's claret, or the old port so strongly recommended by Mr. Beech proved too potent on this particular occasion. Matthew Hutton strikes a note of sadness in his announcement of the death of his mother Barbara, with a graceful allusion to Simon's "Paradise," and an old and troublesome acquaintance reappears upon the scene.

(1748)

"Chester Post,
"1 *o'clock.*

"Dear Sir,

"The private news of Chester says that a most general dissatisfaction prevails at London against the conclusion of the Peace.* The paper hints the same thing and seems to point out the Duke of Devonshire as remonstrating against it, and mentioning a great Admiral

* Aix-la-Chapelle.

having resigned.* It also mentions an action between the Allies under the Hereditary prince and the prince of Condé in which the Amsterdam and Hague Letters say we were defeated; but the authority may be somewhat questioned, as it omits almost all circumstances except that the Allies were from 25 to 30 thousand, and the French but 18 thousand. The same foreign letters persist in avering that we took the Havannah on the 5th of July.

"For the rest we are all arrived safe at Chester and most politely received by Mr Yorkes friend.

"I am dear Sir your most faithful and humble Servt

"JOSHUA STEELE."

MATTHEW HUTTON *to his brother-in-law* SIMON YORKE

"*Tuesday, Jan.* 9, 1749.

"DEAR SIR,

"After all the flattering hopes we have had of my Dear Mother's Recovery, this brings you an Account of her Death, which has greatly shocked and surprized me. She was (as all about her thought) yesterday morning in a speedy way of Recovery, had Phill say his prayers by her bedside and talked cheerfully to Miss Lally of her getting up again, but about 9 o'clock was taken with a Stitch which was followed with another most violent One, was extremely cold, and declared herself struck with Death and expired between seven and eight a'clock last night. She had her Senses, I find, intirely clear to her last Moments tho' I could not bear to go into her Room myself, for some time before she dyed. I do not in the least question but that you will break this Melancholy letter to Mrs Yorke in the tenderest manner. My Brother James went to Town yesterday morning, not long before my Mother was taken

* Sir Edward Hawke.

in the maner as I have above related to you, leaving her, as he imagined in a fair way of Recovery. I have sent today for him down again, and as soon after he comes down as conveniently may be, you shall have an Account how she has disposed of her Affairs; till then, will not open her Will, being in the deepest Concern for her; and scarce capable of giving you the Account. Your Little Boy is well, and shall have due care taken of him.

" I am, sir, with kind Love to Mrs Yorke,

" Your affectionate Brother and Servant,

" Matthew Hutton.

" Phill is to go to school next Monday."

John Lawry *to his cousin* Simon Yorke

" Whit Church,

" *ten of the clock.*

" Honoured Sir,

" I return you and Mrs Yorke abundance of thanks for the use of your servant and all other favors, and I will trouble you with my thanks to Mr Woolfe for the use of his Nag which carried me very well; the morning looked unpromising, but I had very little rain and one of the pleasantest rides hither I ever had in my life, and what was better still I found myself after a disuse of several months as good a horseman as I have ever been—but that perhaps you will say might easily be. I am much refreshed by my ride; and hope I shall be able without fatigue to reach at least to the four Crosses to-night before owl light if not further.

" Mrs Yorke's politeness and good nature and kind obliging behaviour on every occasion is not to be forgot and I may venture to tell her by you what is very true that I love and esteem her greatly. I am only very sorry that in her great good nature that she gave herself the trouble of rising today so early. I do not by any means

think it too much to travel to and again some hundred of miles in so short a time for the sake of seeing You and her. But yet I cannot help wishing for my own sake the distance was less between us. I heartily wish Mr Wolfe soon to get rid of his troublesome complaint. I beg you will make my apologies and compliments to Mr Lloyd and Mr Lee when they come. It would have been a pleasure to me upon many accounts if I could have stayed with you a week or ten days longer. But chiefly because I always leave my best friend with regret even tho' it is to go to a most tender and affectionate wife.

"I am, Honoured Sir, with Duty respects and thanks and humble service to you and Mrs Yorke and Mrs Middleton and Mr Woolfe.

"Your most Dutiful Nephew and most obliged
"humble servant,
"JOHN LAWRY.

"The great Coat and Horses and Dog I have sent back. The Book, if I live and do well I will bring back with me another year, the Cloke shall be taken some care of."

This letter of Mr. Lawry's is almost undecipherable, having evidently been well rained upon while in the pocket of the groom.

Mr. Lawry was a bachelor when he paid this visit, but he did not long after enjoy the single state. The lady's name is not mentioned, his mother, mother-like, did not consider her good enough for her precious son, but she lived long enough to appreciate her daughter-in-law and to bury her. Mr. Lawry had two daughters, and a son Simon who also went into the Church.

Extract—Elizabeth Lawry

"*May* 9, 1749.

"I give you thanks for your kind congratulation upon my son's marriage and hope it may be for both their Good, tho I had no hand in it, as it was very far from my thoughts, nor could have been brought to have my consent if her Brother had not done all he could to make some provisions for her, as matrimony is attended with more expenses than single Life and I think a woman ought to bring her share towards it, her father's misfortune in her younger time I believe has brought her into a frugal way of thinking, therefore hope she will make my son a good wife, as she has been brought up in a sober virtuous way and has had no opportunity of going into extravagances since she has been grown up from her childhood. They are now both at Rochester, my son being obliged to go into residence she was desirous of going with him tho they take in but in an indifferent way."

From a young lawyer after a visit to Erthig

"Rothwell North.tonshire,

"*September* 16, 1749.

"Sir,

"I am certain before this Time freely accused me of the highest breach of Good manners and even Gratitude in not returning you thanks for the many favours so undeservedly receiv'd at Erthig; but I can assure you my silence did not proceed from my not being sensible of the obligation I lay under but the Hopes I had of procuring some franks and therefore delayed writing not thinking my letter was worth postage:— But alas, Sir all my friends in this part of England as well as myself have the Misfortune to be such wicked

Whigs that we are not intimate with the only franker who lives near us and as there is nothing in the world I should dread than the incurring Mrs. Yorke's censure I will delay no longer but in this Manner beg leave to return both you and Mrs Yorke my Sincere Thanks for the many Civilities you have liberally conferred on me in Denbighshire likewise beg pardon for the many indiscretions and inadvertances to call them no worse I was guilty of there, particularly that memorable Dancing when carried away by too violent a flow of Spirits and in an unguarded vivacity I talked and acted in a Manner I ought not to have done.

"I would name many others but had rather not, because sometimes I hope (how easily we flatter ourselves) they are buried in oblivion Having thus returned Thanks for favours and begged pardon for faults committed let me conclude by assuring Sir that I shall look on these three weeks spent at your House as the happiest in my life if on the whole of my conduct neither you nor Mrs Yorke have repented the [ ] you honoured me with. I am Sir with my sincere compliments to Mrs Yorke.

"Your most obliged and humble servant

"H. Grove.

"My compliments to everybody you were so kind as to introduce me to particularly Mrs Desborough and Miss Rhodes."

Major Roberts, having it must be presumed buried Aliza, here reappears with a new wife, but with the old tale of debts and difficulties.

To his nephew Simon Yorke

"Dear Sir,

"I doe assure you Sir that your Silence gives me great uneasiness not knowing that I have done anything

to forfeit your friendship. I answer'd your kind letter immediately and in it I beg'd the favour of you to be named as trustee for my present wife, my second was to inform you that I was married. You'll do me great pleasure in letting me hear from you as Mrs Roberts fortune was in Land and mortgages and Bonds. I shall be some time getting in money but hope my creditors will be easy. Mrs Roberts joyns me in best respects to you and your Lady and Cousin Lawry if with you. The first time I goe to London I will call at the house.

"I am Sir most truly your sincere friend and most affectionate Humble servant and kinsman,

"David Roberts.

"*August the* 26, 1749.

"Direct to me at my House in Edgware, Middlesex."

"When I received your last favour I examined the servant that was entrusted with the letters, he ownd he lost one of them and for his neglect I have discharged him. Mrs. Roberts joyns me in respects and compliments to you and your Lady and is much obliged to you for the favour you doe of letting her use your name as trustee. I am plagued to death with Mr Vanes delay, he puts me off till Xmas and wish he may then be punctual my people are very sharp upon me, now they really ought to give me time to raise money. I shall soon be in the country to settle with my steward and by that means be out of their way till money can be gott. I thought all plagues were at an end but find to the contrary. As I hope soon to see you shall only assure you that I am with very great regard

"Your most obliged and most humble servant

"David Roberts.

"*Sept.* 16, 1749.

"Edgware."

Life was more sedentary in the middle of the eighteenth century than now; the annual pilgrimage "from the blue bed to the brown" being sufficient to satisfy quiet people well content with the comforts of home. There is no evidence that Simon ever went to London after the time of his marriage, but he occasionally took a house in Chester where there was good county society and in winter time especially an agreeable change from the isolation of a country house. Most likely it was at Chester that he received the following letters written by his steward the elder John Caesar, a person of whom more is to be learned in Dorothy Yorke's correspondence with her son. They are not of very general interest except as a picture of the time and the reference to the cattle disease at all times so fatal a scourge in country districts.

The Steward of Erthig to Mr. Simon Yorke

"*January 22nd*, 1750.

"Honoured Sir,

"Since your absence the weather has been very precarious; consequently we have not been able to make great progress in the Garden; besides nailing the wall trees and digging that piece of Ground in the Nursery in order to set Gooseberries, Currants, Strawberries, &ct. Edward Griffiths has been employed ever since your departure in hedging by the furthest Bridge and in the French Mill meadow. Yesterday R. Henshaw and G. Taylor was employ'd throwing the snow off the top of the House, lest it should dissolve and the wet issue into the rooms. When the Weather Serves we shall carry Gravel for the Firr walk and regulate the New Garden. William has brought you the best part of a

mutton with a Goose and Fowles. I expect the Toll people to pay there Rent this week. Mr. Cheetham was here too day paying a years rent to Michelmas, 1749. Widow Thomas and Widow Roberts was here paying there rents last week; as it will appear in my Account which I shall send you next Friday by William. The Farmer was yesterdy winnow'g Oats at Pentremilin; and tooday was with the Team fetching them to Erthig, and am with due respect to my Mistress,

"Your dutiful Servant

"JOHN CAESAR."

"HONOURED SIR, "*January* 30, 1750.

"Since my last the weather continues Still the Same for the Snow is almost a foot Thick in many places about Erthig, and have not been able to do much business in the Garden, besides Nailing the Cherry trees, Plumbs Pears and planting Goosberries and Currant trees in the Nursery Yesterday and tooday as it is a Frost, the Team is Carrying River Gravel to the new Garden Gates in order to lay on the Firr walk. Robert Henshaw's Son did last Friday after I went to Llangollen Fair; in order to buy Heifers to eat Straw at Pentreemilin; took the Gun out of the House and shot Several of your pigeons; one of which he brought into the House; and call'd it an wood pigeon and said that one of the Dogs did kill it; and other two was found Dead in the Farm yard. This affair was conceal'd from me till yesterday evening, at which time I examin'd him and found him guilty of the fact; which occasioned me to discharge him and told him not to come near the house any more. The Farmer and his Lad takes care with the Coach horses during your absence. All things are well in and about Erthig and remain

"Your Dutiful servant

"JOHN CAESAR."

"Erthig,
"*7 February*, 1750.

"HONOURED SIR,

"Since my last; the Team have carryed a Sufficient Quantity of Gravell to the Bottom of the Hill to cover the Firr walk &c. yesterday and too day as the Farmer was winnowing Oats at Pentremelin; and in bringing the Same to Erthig; have employed the men to Sweep the Snow off the Firr walk, and Serpentine walks adjoining and in wheeling in the Gravel that was carryed the two first days; which almost Covered the new part of the Said walk and the lower Serpentine walk and round the Little Mounts, toomorrow we must Try to Carry the Gravel from the bottom of the Hill in Small Loads as the Hill is so slippery.

"I was told today that widow Jones lost 8 Cows and one other exceedingly bad and not likely to recover and 5 or 6 more taken ill and three is recovered. Samuel Evans was here today paying part of his Rent, They say that the Distemper is broken out again in Farn and Holt. George Cook of Borrass lost four or five Cows. All things are well here who am with Due respects to my Mistress

"Your Dutiful Servant
"JOHN CAESAR."

"Erthig,
"*March* 1, 1750.

"HONOURED SIR,

"Since my last information, the Men have gravel'd the walk in the new Garden from the door to the white Gate, and too day are Gravelling from the said Door to the drying ground, too morrow I hope we shall sett the apple trees along the Same. Robert Henshaw I believe will make an End of Nailing the wall

Trees next Wednesday. Edw. Giller and Edw. Griffiths have been almost all along hedging around your Demaens, and have done the out Ring and between the Fields all to the Hedge between the Wood and the Engine meadows, which they shall do as soon as the gravel is wheeled into the Garden. The Farmer began to plough Cai Shone Lloyd for Oats, only too day is gone to fetch lime for the Slaters who are here repairing the damage that has been done by the wind to the Buildings, many of the tiles are blown off the Granary and the Slates of the Barn, Cow House, Stable, Dairy and Kitchen, the top of the House escaped tolerably for there is but five small breeches in the whole. The wind whirled rotten Sticks from the big Elm trees which broke Several Squares of the Kitchen Windows and the window above the same next to the Dairy Yard and one of the Squares of the great Hall Door is broke and one light of the Cupula Window and one light of the upper window upon the Garret. Stair and one light of the Lumber garret window and some few squares of the Stable window. The wind has blow'd down two trees down in the Wood one of which is in the Casstle field and the other in the Wood above the French Mills. Several Branches of the Firr trees is broken in Gwern Erthig and several big boughs upon the Hill at Each End of the House. Barley takes but a low rate, am bid for yours but 18d. a measure. All things but I mentioned are well in and about Erthig and am with due respect to my Mistress."

"Erthig,
"1 *February*, 1750.

"Honoured Sir,

"The teams have been two days carrying Gravel to the new Garden Gate as last; and yesterday and too day have been Still carrying [ ] from the French Mill meadow, which they lay down at the bottom of the Hill

near the Turn Stile; for the Hill is all along covered with Ice and so Slippery that the Horses can hardly draw an Empty Cart up. The Toll people paid but 9. 0. 0. towards their quarters rent and Says that they laid out of their Pockets 1. 4. 0 to make up that Sum over and above what they received from the Toll the last Quarter upon the account of the loss they Suffer'd Cattle being forbid to be sold in Wrexham market every Thursday as usually they did before the Distemper was; and are in hopes you will make them an abatement of the other Twenty shillings for the last quarter or else it will go hard with Some of them for two of the Partners are Poor. The Distemper is now at widow Jones of Pickill, one Sickened this day seven night which is now recovered; four Cows sickened last Wednesday and three yesterday and never a one was Dead this morning, the Distempered cattle She puts up in a building by themselves lest they should infect the Cattle that are well. Today I heard the Distemper is at Borass Hall and at George Cook's near the Same place. I sold two of your Cattle one of which was a Heifer for 3. 7. 6 and a cow for 4. 0. 0, as will appear by my Accounts next week and one Heifer we had killt today and as many Choice pieces as William can carry besides the Linnen we shall Send by him for your use too morrow. So now you have but two of the Heifers left, all things are well in and about Erthig, and am with due respects to my Mistress,

"Honoured Sir Your dutiful servant

"JOHN CAESAR."

III

The letters which follow form a chapter in themselves, and, although written at irregular intervals during a period of nearly seven years, are given in sequence instead of being placed according to date. The writer, Mr.

Owen Brereton, was a Cheshire gentleman of some note, and barrister of Lincoln's Inn. His father, Sir Thomas Brereton of Shotover Park, married as his second wife an heiress, Miss Salusbury, and his son Owen coming in for his father's property took over his stepmother's name. Elected Recorder of Liverpool in 1742, he held that office fifty six years; so great indeed was his popularity that no one would accept his resignation. He sat in the House of Commons for Ilchester and Somerset, was Constable of Flint, and a member of many learned Societies. Some letters of his written from Ireland were composed perhaps in the intervals of collecting information for his Monograph on the "Round Towers." Natural phenomena always excited his interest; he published an account of "A Great storm at Eastbourne," and wrote a graphic description of a London earthquake to his country friend. His first letter contains less gossip than parliamentary news, the latter particularly welcome when newspapers were few, and journalism in its earliest youth.

"*February 20th*, 1749.

"Dear Sir,

"I was in hopes before now to have sent you some news, but have very little; in the House last night they finished the last Party Bill to let the Soldiers demand their dismission after some years service; which the House did not think absolutely necessary for the wellbeing of the whole, and so throw it out on a Division; a younger Brother of Littleton's spoke tolerably well that Day for the first time. The Bedford Road Bill has made more noise and been better attended than any. The Capulets (for so they call the Duke of B's freinds) had

success at first on some divisions, but at the long Run, the Montagues rally'd and got the day by a majority of about 50; which Victory was by them attributed to an affront said to be taken by the Scotch Members at having their Letters from the Capulets desiring their attendance directed one and all to the British Coffee House as if," as they said "they were vagabonds and had no certain Habitations."

"The High Baylif tells me that they have just finished ¼ of their scrutiny there are several wagers depending whether Westminster Bridge or the Westminster Election will be first finisht. I think if the Independants' purse holds out the Bridge will but *e contra* if the Fund shou'd expire Lord Trentham has a chance of sitting some time next term. In the meanwhile the two champions Crowle and Webb will remain bound over to their good Behaviour for fear of facing each other improperly.

"We are like to have another struggle for Middlesex; Mr Honeywood being determined to oppose Cook and will in all probability succeed. The subscriptions which hung a hand a long time are now coming so fast that the Bank House and Exchequer are like Fairs; there is above 6 millions subscribed and from what more may reasonably be expected before the 28th I beleive we may pronounce the scheme successful, many going with the stream that a few days ago declared positively in my hearing against it.

"I long to know if the Earthquake we had on the 8th instant at Noon was felt so far off as Chester, one other shake they say would have demolished at least all the high Houses in these Citys. I must own I felt nothing of it, but few that were walking or in Coaches or on the Water did feel it. They who were sitting perceived it most, and the nearer the Top of the House the more terribly. The Breakfasting at Ranelagh was to have begun that morning, but for an accident and as it would

have happened just in the Height of their Diversion I fancy it would have put the company in some confusion. My Lord Chancellor says He felt the Wall of the Hall press against his back as he sat in the Court that day.*

"Our weather here is more like June than February and if it is so with you, your Paradise must be in high beauty. I did not perceive by yours that the opening you thought of making through the Wood for a view of Brumbo from the North Pavillion has taken effort. I fear it would not do. The other alterations must be very pretty.

"The Town is in great expectation of a new Tragedy called the Roman Father wrote by one Whitehead of Cambridge with me (not the Impudent author of Manners) which is to come out on Friday or Saturday patronized by Lord Sandwych and many great men, and the House is taken for 8 nights already. I hope Mrs Yorke is very well to whom I beg my Compliments and sir

"Your obedeint servant
"Owen Brereton."

Was it Lyttleton himself or his "younger brother," the eccentricity of whose appearance was the occasion of the following rhyme?

Who's dat who rides astride the pony,
So long, so lank, so lean, so boney,
Oh, de great orator, Little toney.

* "You know we have had an earthquake,—a few evenings before there was a bright cloud which the mob called 'the bloody cloud.' The weather has been unbearably hot.

"There was a second earthquake a month later, and a report got abroad that there would be yet a third and that would destroy London. So many persons fled to the country and ladies wore 'earthquake' gowns. One impudent mountebank sold pills which he told the people were very good against the earthquake.

"Sir Isaac Newton, it is said, foretold a change of climate about this time and wished he could have lived to see it."—Walpole's Letters.

John Russell, fourth duke of Bedford, held office as Lord High Admiral in the Pelham Ministry, but was on the worst of terms with his colleagues. Newcastle hated him, Henry Pelham complained of his idleness, saying with him it was all " jollity, boyishness, and vanity and that he was always at play." On the resignation of Lord Chesterfield in 1748 the duke was invested with the seals, as Secretary of the Southern division.—The Lord Chancellor, Philip, First Earl of Harkwicke, " the finest English lawyer who ever took part in politicks," was second cousin to Simon Yorke.

William Whitehead, a Cambridge baker's son, became poet laureate in 1757. He was a prolific writer, but his works are now forgotten. Paul Whitehead, also a poet, wrote satires, one of which, " State Dunces," was ascribed to Pope. He was of obscure origin and evil repute, and was at one time a member of that ill-famed brotherhood, the " monks " of Medmenham Abbey.

The allusion to the High Bailiff and the Westminster Election in the first, leads on to this second letter and the lengthy but interesting chapter concerning Murray and Crowle. First as to the Election. " During the whole Spring Session of 1750 the City of Westminster and indeed the public in general were in dreadful consternation on account of the Election for that city." Lord Trentham and the previous candidate being opposed by Sir George Vanderput supported by the Prince of Wales, his adherents calling themselves " Independents," Lord Trentham having the majority, a scrutiny was demanded by Sir George, and so much delay was occasioned by recounting the large number

of votes, that from November to February the writ had not been returned. So much for the Election*—the sequel is entertaining. "Mr Crowle, counsel for Sir George Vanderput, a warm man, made use of very irritating expressions, and when at its conclusion the Tory guns were fired told his antagonist that their threatenings were now Brutum Fulmen as the House had no further power." The matter was brought before the House, the High Bailiff (Mr. Peter Leigh) complained of ill-treatment and Crowle with his friends, Murray and Gibson, ordered to receive their sentence, kneeling before the bar.

The unparliamentary language of Mr. Crowle is told in the letter, but he and Mr. Gibson bent their knees and paid their fine. Not so the Hon. Alexander Murray; his Scottish pride was in arms at such an indignity, he refused to kneel, and there was no known precedent by which to compel him. His enemies clamoured for incarceration in the Tower, for torture even. In the end he was confined under the closest restrictions in Newgate. Here, though he nearly lost his life by gaol fever, he refused conciliation, and at the end of the Session returned in triumphal procession to his own home.

"Lincolns Inn,
"*February 7th*, 1750.

"Dear Sir,

"I have long waited for an opportunity of trying to entertain you with news from a Place the most productive of it but of late it is become extremely barren,

* Horace Walpole, writing to Sir Horace Mann, also describes this Election, the Scrutiny, and the Tryal which followed.

every thing being 'a la mort' till my Brother Crowle was call'd upon to construe '*Brutum Fulmen*' upon his knees, who upon getting up brushed his Breeches, declaring the House was a Damned Dirty one You see by the votes that Murray is committed close Prisoner to Newgate for the contempt in refusing to kneel while the order of the House was reading to him. He had asked Comyns, one of his Council for an excuse, and at last resolved to say that when he had offended his Maker he knelt, but never would he kneel to any below him; which Answer startled the Speaker much, and the rather as they knew not a Precedent for forcing a man into that posture, but they have ordered a Committee to search the Books and report what's to be done. They say he had actually sent cards intending to have a rout in the new Apartment which he had sometime declared he was sure of visiting. Admiral Ver—n hoped that the House would not send the best Blood of North Britain to so vile a prison. Mr F— said that as he had lived long enough to have remembered some of the best blood of Antient Britain sent by the Displeasure of the House to the same place (meaning Mr W. Myddleton) he did not see the force of the Argument nor would make Comparisons. Mr Syd—m said he had been strenuously for the Gentleman till he refused to kneel, but would have the motion altered to send him to Bedlam instead of Newgate, and Mr Crowle now says he can construe '*Brutum Fulmen*' or at least his friend Murray can, that it means Newgatory (nugatory) Thunder, but it is not to be wrote. I called the other morning on our friends at Lambeth and find Mrs Lawry to be in a very good way and both of them very well they were going for some time to Lee.

"I am your most obliged obedient servant

"Owen Brereton."

" Lincolns Inn,
" *March 9th*, 1750.

" Dear Sir,

" I received yours and have had little to entertain you with since : the House of Commons sits very late every evening, occasioned by the Naturalization, and the Mutiny Bills, the principal Clause in the former was carry'd last night at ten o'clock in favour of the Bill by a majority of above two to one ; so fancy it will be carry'd there, but have my Doubts about the House of Lords from a Discourse I had the other Day with the Archbishop of Canterbury about it. As to the Mutiny Bill Sir Erskyn, having in the beginning of the Debate mention'd the necessity of amendment in it on account of Anstruther's behaviour at Minorca, He was instantly called upon to make his charge good which has set the House in a Ferment and has drawn a long Petition from a Physician whom he banisht from the Island and used Cruelly, but it being against one of their own Members after it was read (and a pretty smart one it was,) nothing further was done upon it, and the Order of the Day called for, but it produced much zeal against the Governor, because therein it appeared that there had been divers complaints on the like score before the King and Council ; and they reported that every allegation in all the petitions were proved fully to their satisfaction, but all those Proceedings you see by the Votes are ordered to be laid before the House, for which they now wait.

" The very extraordinary entertainment I was at on Thursday at Drury Lane may have reached you, yet will just tell you I am sure no Modern Theatre ever produced such an appearance from the Bottom to the Top of the house and all drest out to the utmost. The Princes' Box in which were the 5 young Princes, and the other Stage Box in which was the Princess Amelia were the

only Boxes suffered to be kept; and all the rest of the House open to the first comers at five o'clock, so you will easily conclude the People of the best Fashion were forced to walk up 3 or 4 pair of Stairs and glad to get the seats their servants occupied the night before among the 'Gods.' It was a droll sight to see Mr Pelham (who was squeezed in between his wife and daughter in a side box) making his Bows to his Brother Ministers the Duke of Bedford and Lord Sandwich, who were in the last row of the Footmens Gallery; and to see the great Hoops leaning over the first Row of the same Gallery and the Pidgeon Holes discoursing with other Parts of the House! By having every Person's name wrote on their Tickets you may imagine it kept out all Bad company and really there was not any that appeared in View if any were there; and all their Jewels and Dresses were very conspicuous by means of the vast Number of Wax Candles in all parts of the House very properly disposed. The Play was really acted tolerably well. The second Delavel acted Jago very well and received much applause; the whole was conducted with great Regularity and Decency after the first Loving Squeeze at the opening of the Doors which the screams of some of the Fair Sex showed their Disapprobation of in that Place but it was not to be avoided. I hope to be with you about the 18th and I am your most obedient servant

"O. Brereton.

"Anstruther having been always steady even against his countryman in Porteous's affair has Fox at the Head of all the old Whigs for Him, but some Moderns and all the Torys and the Scotch *contra.*"

The bill for the Naturalization of Foreign Immigrants never passed into Law; but the Mutiny bill occupied the attention of Parliament for many succeeding sessions.

"There are few more curious pages in English History than the gradual change of public opinion on the subject of Standing Armies. The Mutiny Act, first passed as a temporary contrivance, (when 800 soldiers at Ipswich mutinied in favour of James II) was re-enacted sometimes for six months, more often for a year. In the reigns of William and of Anne there were periods as long as two years when it was not in force. But it cannot be disputed that a body of armed men accustomed to act together under discipline cannot be controlled by mild and tardy civil law." It must be remembered also of what ingredients our first standing army was composed, by what methods were manned the English fleets, that made the name of England a terror on the seas. The Press gang, authorized in the first instance to impound all criminals and known bad characters, soon extended their grip over vagrants as well; and every able bodied man unable to show lawful occupation shared the same fate, a fate so terrible, that it is best described in a speech made by Admiral Vernon of Portobello fame. "Our fleets which are defrauded by injustice are first manned by violence and maintained by cruelty. When our ships are to be filled, an impress is sent into the street, to bring those who shall fall in the way by force into the vessels, from that time they are in fact condemned to death since they are never again allowed to set foot upon shore but turned over from ship to ship and when they have finished one expedition, hurried into another without any regard to the hardships they have suffered, the provisions upon which they are obliged to subsist, a practice so horrid and barbarous that it is sufficient

to deter any one from entering into the service at all."

"Lincolns Inn,
"*May* 23, 1751.

"Dear Sir,

"I should have dated this the 6th Day of Summer, for we have had good Weather ever since last Saturday, in truth; it has been long in coming, for I concluded when I left Chester that I also left Winter behind me and little imagined I should find Easter a Winter term, but so it has proved.

"The Regency past on Monday without a Division after a Speech of an Hour from Mr Pelham, chiefly in answer to one from the Speaker 3 days before, who inveighed against it most Bitterly and divided against it on the six Divisions. Besides Him, I think no one but Torys opposed it, Sydenham declared that He spoke against it on that principal of being an Honest Old Tory, and to such He recommended it to oppose the Council and the prolonging the Parliament. At our end of the town, the Calender Bill, the Bill for making all future Legacies to Witnesses of Wills to Lands void, and the Bill for shortning Michelmas term which last, I fear, will not succeed like the former because [Murray]'s against it and the Chancellor in his Heart, though he assured Moreton He would not oppose it if the Judges approved of it, which indeed they have done; if it passes we need not be up in Town till the 6th of November, whereas if it does not, in the year 1752 and so on we must be up by the present 12th of October which will be leaving the Country in the pleasantest season of the year.

"Vauxhall took the advantage of this fine weather and opened on Monday to 7000 people, being the greatest number ever known there at once, but, it was truly disagreable for there was no such thing as walking and if you were lucky enough to get a seat it was ten to one you

got nothing to eat or drink there, they crowded so about the Miss Gunnings * that after they had got 20 yards into the Gardens, they were fixt like Statues in the middle of a Circle truly magical, for there was no getting out of it, to Lord Coventry's confusion, who certainly is to have the eldest.

"We have an express from Liverpool this morning relating to our settlements in Africa where it appears some French Men of War have been too free, and must be talkt to about it in earnest!

"Our Chester Ladies here begin to think the Roads are almost grown passable or will be so after tomorrow, when there is to be a great Jubilee Masquerade at Ranelagh at the King's desire. As to Mrs Warburton, she has wrench'd her knee, getting into a Coach, so much that she is a cripple and taken to her Couch for at least a fortnight. I fancy your late Landlady will have changed her name before she sees Home again, for her relations are now let into the secret.

"It will be the middle of next month I dare say, before the Parliament rises, to the concern of many Country Gentlemen, though I believe the House will be but thin after the holidays.

"I hope Mrs Yorke and you are extremely well. I beg my respects.

"I am your obedient Servant
"O. Brereton.

"Your little Gentleman is very impatient for his company to set out for Erthig."

* "The two Miss Gunnings are twenty times more the subject of conversation than the two brothers (Pelham and Newcastle). There are two Irish girls of no fortune, who are declared the handsomest women alive. I think there being two so handsome and such perfect figures is their chief excellence, for singly I have seen much handsomer women than either; however, they can't walk in the Park or go to Vauxhall, but such mobs follow them they are generally driven away."—Walpole's Letters.

Frederick, prince of Wales, was always on the worst of terms with his parents. How Queen Caroline hated him, especially when he affected a show of filial devotion —"Paraître" she called it! There is a divergence of opinion concerning his ability and character and whether the laudatory expressions about his intellect and virtues are or are not merely conventional phrases of the "Opposition" party to which he belonged. He died unexpectedly to himself and to the world, intriguing to the last. His name is perhaps best remembered by his mocking epitaph

Here lies Fred,
Who was alive and is dead.
Had it been his father
I had much rather,
Had it been his brother,
Still better than another.
Had it been his sister,
No one would have missed her.
Had it been the whole generation,
Still better for the nation.
But since it is only Fred,
There is no more to be said.

On the death of his heir, the King sent a message to both Houses asking them to provide for the administration of affairs in case of his own demise. A furious controversy was the immediate result, some members being in favour of giving undivided power to the Princess Dowager, others as hotly contending that her authority should be kept in check by a Council of Regency with the Duke of Cumberland at its head.

The Ministry divided on the issue, Pitt and Fox spoke on opposite sides, and Pelham declared that Pitt's speech, which combined suspicion of the Duke with support of restrictions on the power of the Princess, " the best he ever heard " ; but it gave great offence, and Fox in a rage left the House without voting. The Duke of Bedford, though a Cumberland partizan, loyally supported the claims of the Princess, and Mr. Charles Yorke, while adding his tribute to her personality, concluded as follows " He was fully convinced that to dispense with a Council, and give to the Regent full power, was absolutely inconsistent with our Constitution and that the precedent then set might on a future occasion be attended with serious consequences."

Strangely slow are the English nation to take in a new idea, for as late as the middle of the eighteenth century the obsolete and inaccurate " Julian " Calendar was still in use. More than two centuries had already elapsed since Pope Gregory 13th had introduced a reformed Calendar through Central and Southern Europe, but England, Denmark, and Sweden, stubbornly Protestant, rejected even an Almanack made in Rome. It is to Lord Chesterfield, ably supported by Lord Macclesfield, President of the Royal Society, that the present generation owes this incalculable boon ; and the year, which before dated from March 25th, was altered so as to begin on January 1. The change necessitated the dropping out of eleven days which it was agreed should be done between the 2nd and 14th of September, 1751, an alteration of some inconvenience at the time. The painter Hogarth, whose satirical sketches reflect as in a

mirror the opinions of his day, has placed in the first of his Election pictures a banner bearing the words "Give back our eleven days," and outside the window in the same sketch, one inscribed with another popular sentiment "Marry and multiply in spite of the Devil and the Court." (This in allusion to Lord Hardwicke's equally unpopular Marriage Bill.) The Saxony bill was briefly the proposal for granting a subsidy under the guise of Alliance, for the pecuniary relief of the Elector of Saxony, an ancient creditor of England's Hanoverian Elector king.

"Lincolns Inn,
"*November* 26, 1751.

"Dear Sir,

"I sit down merely to let you know according to your Request, that it was last night settled in private that the Land Tax should be 3 shillings for 1752 and indeed have very little News for you.

"The Duke's [of Cumberland ?] illness engrosses all conversation, he having met with just such an accident as Sir Watkin by his horse, but pitch'd on his left side and remain'd senseless some minutes, and then would ride Home to Windsor, and thence to London in the afternoon, and appear'd at Court, the next day, which was last Sunday sen'night, having refused absolutely to be blooded till Tuesday last when he became very ill from a complaint in the side. He fell (suppos'd to be bruis'd much internally), and then he lost at 3 bleedings 70 ounces, and still lays very ill, but this day is said to be better. The King certainly sat up with him the most part of last night. When such folks are ill one seldom hears the Truth till they are dead or quite recover'd.

"My Lord Chancellor has had his annual Illness, but is now quite well and attends as usual.

"The Commons have with great spirit and indeed *Nem. Con* revived their orders against Murray, and noticed his printed case, and are determin'd to bend Him if possible as you see by applying to the Crown for a Proclamation against him.

"I hear 3000 is gone from the Lottery to Mrs Will Warburton. I wish you better success if you are an adventurer therein. Here has fallen much rain lately about this city that the roads are quite full of Water and more so I find than were ever remembered.

"I beg my compliments to Mrs Yorke and remain your obliged and humble servant

"O. Brereton."

"Lincolns Inn,
"*January 28th*, 1752.

"Dear Sir,

"I have very little news to send you, so sit down merely to welcome you to your Winter quarters and so wish you and Mrs. Yorke Many Happy years. I fear you had but an unpleasant Walk to Chester if your weather has been like ours, for it has been near a month as disagreable as I ever remember it and does not promise amendment.

"I had got thus far with my Letter when I recollected that the Lords were summoned today on the Saxony treaty, so marched there directly; Duke of Bedford moved for an address to stop it as a most wrong Measure for the King to take and spoke above an Hour and Half, Duke of Newcastle answered him in less than an Hour and neither of them spoke extraordinarily, then Lord Sandwich declared that much might be said on both sides, agreed with 19 out of 20 things said by the Duke of Bedford but on the whole would not second the motion, He spoke a little warm but was very Decent. Lord Halifax then agreed with the Duke of Newcastle *in toto*

and was pretty long, then Duke of Bedford spoke again near ½ an Hour and lastly Lord Granvil in about the same time finished the debate and most clearly outshone them all. He concluding with desiring the Motion might be withdrawn, but the Duke not consenting the Question was put and for what I saw He was the only one that was for it: It was treated much in the same manner in the House of Commons lately with a very small minority of 40 or 50. It is whispered that the Elector of Saxony owes our K—— as Elector on an old morgage a large sum of mony, and he being very poor, this is thought a good way, nay indeed, the only way of getting up a large Arrear of Interest and that paid at Home without any Deductions.

"The Lords having rejected the Judges Will bill and ordered in another framed by my Lord Chancellor on the Plan of the Commons Bill with several Alterations, they have almost settled it that both Creditor and Legatee under certain circumstances may be witnesses and intend it shall have a Retrospect till the 6th. of May which saves Lord Derby's estate in good time, but the Scotch murmur.

"I saw Lawry at the House who desired to be remembered to you, they are come to Lambeth; the Master of which Palace, the World will marry to Baron Clark's Widow for what can Widows do better than solace themselves with Maiden Batchelors. It may set an Example. I beg my compts. to Mr Lloyd and remain your obliged Humble Servant

"Owen Brereton.

"I desire my compliments to Mr. T. Lee who will approve I daresay such a match as the above."

" Chester,
" *Nov.* 2, 1752.

" Dear Sir,

" I made enquiry at Liverpool about the Barometer, and learn that the globe on the Top of the Glass is thought to make the Quicksilver rise and fall truer, but is not absolutely necessary ; and that your Tube will do if the Distance from the surface of the Quicksilver to the Scale is 28 inches.

" I also enquired about the Salt glasses, and find that they may be had of Mr Penket in Liverpool, at about 3 or 4 shillings the four according to their size, but he must have a Salt cellar for a Pattern which may be sent to his brother, a Grocer in this place who will forward it accordingly.

" I received your Card, and will take care about the Frame. I was last night at Captain Drapers Rout at the Yatcht, there were above 60 stayd supper after the Cards were over, Lady Grosvenor presided over the old Table, and Miss *Bodvil* over the Misses which were in different Rooms ; The Company was very Brilliant, and everything conducted with as little Confusion as possible : The Beautys present were Mrs Comberbach, Miss Cowper, Miss Morgan of Ireland, and Miss Harwood, and some say Miss Bunbury, Sir William's Eldest Daughter.

" I was in hopes of telling you this in person this day, but two attendances at the Office prevent me, both this Day and tomorrow, and Saturday or Sunday, Tommy Mainwaring sets out with me in a Postchaise for London. I was to set out sooner, but wait till his Sister is buried, which is to be tomorrow.

" I hear she has left all her fortune, except Legacys, to Him.

" I beg my Compliments to Mrs Yorke, and wish you

both your Healths and a pleasant Winter, and remain your much obliged Humble Servant

"O. Brereton."

The tolerance proceeding from indifferentism prevalent in the eighteenth century among the upper classes, was not shared by the populace, and the Act for the naturalization of the Jews, though supported by the Bishops, was received with indignation by the inferior clergy, who preached vehemently against the privileges granted to a nation condemned to be wanderers by authority of Holy Writ. "No Jews" was a popular cry, and so great were the tumults that the Act was repealed the following year.

Among the many social reforms enacted during the Pelham Ministry, none was more important and far-reaching than Lord Hardwicke's "Marriage Bill." Until the passing of the Act, marriage had been celebrated under Canon Law, consent of the parties followed by cohabitation constituting in themselves a valid marriage which might be celebrated at any time or place. A whole class of disreputable clerics living chiefly in the neighbourhood of Fleet prison, made a large income by the celebration of clandestine marriages. Alexander Keith of Curzon Street Chapel boasted that he united 6000 (?) couples in a year. Drunken sailors by the hundred fell victims to the wiles of the dregs of the population, and the coming in of the Fleet was the signal for an orgy of clandestine marriages. Under these irregular conditions was the Duke of Hamilton married to Miss Gunning, the ceremony taking place at midnight with a curtain ring; the Duke of Kingston to a Maid of

Honour, the notorious Miss Chudleigh*; and Fox to Lady Caroline Lennox, daughter of the Duke of Richmond.

Now all this was to be at end. Marriage, except in the case of Quakers or Jews, could be celebrated only by a clergyman of the Anglican persuasion (a clause which gave great offence to other denominations and was altered in 1833) and in the parish church. Consent of guardians in the case of a minor must be first obtained, and the banns (except by the purchase of a licence) must be first published three Sundays in succession. Wilkinson of the Savoy claimed privilege for exemption, and boasted that he celebrated 1400 marriages after the passing of the Act. He was eventually brought to justice by Garrick, who, through a member of his company, obtained a Savoy licence. Wilkinson and his curate were transported beyond the sea, and beyond the sea, to Guernsey or the Isle of Man fled eloping couples, unable except beyond the Border to indulge in the luxury of marriage without leave.

"Lincolns Inn,
"*Feb.* 6, 1753.

"Dear Sir,

"Two reasons have prevented my troubling you sooner, this Winter with my scrawl, one that I was pack'd to Bath almost as soon as I got to town, and the other, that in Truth there was nothing from hence to

* "Miss Chudleigh, though a Maid of Honour, was secretly married to Augustus, second son of Lord Harvey, by whom she had two children. The couple disagreed, and she lived openly with the Duke of Kingston and married him during Mr. Harvey's life. When George II was her fervent admirer; he actually loosened his purse-strings to give her a fairing. He got her mother appointed housekeeper at Windsor, and in the presence of the Court took a kiss from the daughter as a reward."—Walpole's Letters.

entertain you with : I returned here to Term leaving a small Cheshire Colony behind me out of whom I think only Two are Invalides. Old Mrs. Davenport who is in a very dangerous way, and poor Ellis Lloyd who his Doctor assures me is in no more danger of dying than himself, but he lives a very retired life and was just recovered of a fever which had left him extremely thin ; The Waters, the approaching Spring and Exercise will I hope set him up. His Doctor recommends the South of France ; the water agreed pretty well with me but have made me very thin indeed. I have got the Frame and Glass ready for the Arms and only want an opportunity of sending it down to you by a safe Hand : I stay'd so long for some good Ebony. Lawry was with me to tell me he had got another Girl. I find a boy would have pleased him better. Folks here by no means like this Memorial from the enterprising Head of Prussia, they set Dr. Lee the Solicter-General to work for Materials to answer it, then the Attorney drew it up and lastly the Council made a small alteration, away t'was posted if possible to satisfye One not easily to be satisfy'd by any reasons but his own ; France takes the Hint, a stop is put to our Commissarys at Paris till the Event is known. Adams to his own and our Great Surprise is become Judge tho' only a very few years my Senior at the Bar, to prevent Lord Chancellor from being offended that Harvy was not named and Lord Granville and others that Bathurst had it not, some third man must come in not named by any minister, but by the King himself, and who could be supposed to name as from Himself, but the Recorder of London, who is the only man below the Bench he could have any personal knowledge of. Such is State *Finesse*. The very wicked behaviour of your Friend Mr Wymondesold's wife is still the publick Talk, they say he has his choice of actions against several Gallants ; Jo. Child moved the Court of Kings Bench

yesterday to set aside the proceedings against Him on an Affidavit from his Servant, that his Master had changed cloaks with him in order to escape, and the Writ was served upon him in his Master's Cloaths and that his Master was gone to Paris ; where she likewise is removed with all her Jewels.

" Our *Bon vivants* met with a repulse in the House of Commons the other day in their attempt to repeal so much of the Bottle Act as relates to bringing over the best (Champagne) French Wines in Bottles, the division was 164 to 44. Lord Hilsborough moved it and Mr Fox seconded him. There is great uncertainty about filling the Recordership, Pratt and Whitaker quasi Whigs, Morton and Sir Anthony Abdy qua Torys ; Not one Alderman will promise : if they are reduced to Two, Moreton will carry it if more stand the last Poll. I should think Pratt would succeed.

" Pelham open'd his Budget yesterday and the Land Tax is fixt for this year at 2 shillings on condition that the Duty on Salt is made perpetual ; it has been much talked without Doors that the Bounty on Corn would be taken off, but he declar'd they had never any such Intention. Sydenham proposed a Tax on Swords and full Bottom Wigs which last do not amount to 40 in the whole kingdom, the Speaker Attorney, and Solicitor the only wearers then in the House pulled off their hats to thank him. I beg my best Respects to Mrs Yorke. I hope this will find you both very well and remain

" Your most obliged humble servant

" Owen Brereton."

" Lincolns Inn,

" *June* 7, 1753.

" Dear Sir,

" It was not in my power to wait upon you, when last at Chester. The Assizes or rather the Races em-

ployed our time the whole Week which was all the time I spent there decamping with Serjeant Hayward in a Post Chaise upon the Fryday, you have no doubt heard how we without Doors have been entertained this fortnight past with the Jew and Marriage bills ; the former which only allows Jews a liberty of applying for a bill to be naturalized under many restrictions will I daresay be a great advantage to us as a Nation and was accordingly unanimously past by the Lords and indeed almost so by the Commons none but thorough Torys with the City Members opposing, and that only by one debate on the 3rd reading when a petition came from the Common Council at past XI at night when I was present. It seems no objection was made to it while with the Lords but the Sunday preceeding one Romaine, a mob popular Preacher rail'd at it most furiously at St. Dunstans and some other Church which sent all the City a madding.

"The other Bill was prepared by the Judges in the House of Lords also but it was so materially altered by my Lord Chancellor that in truth it is deem'd his own and at such past them very readily but in the Commons it has been harder fought than ever matter was in my Father's memory : They debated it as many days as there are Clauses in it and one night with another sat till XI, they had 18 divisions : the last on which the bill was past was 128 to 56. In first Debate Nugent spoke well against committing it and much the greatest part of the House seem'd against the Bill, but yet agreed to commit it ; next day I verily think the Bill would have been thrown out if Mr. Pelham had not warmly espoused it which brought Numbers over but it gave offence that such a Bill should have been made a Party Cause and on this head Sir Wy—, Mr. Fx Mr. C : F—d and the Sp—r were very warm and continued to oppose every line in the Bill Mr Pelham declared he would do his utmost to support it, and indeed never quitted the

spot a Quarter of an Hour any day ; nor indeed did my Father, who was as warm for it as any one, but he has reason : It received a great many amendments and several new Clauses, all of which were agreed to by the Lords yesterday in a few hours. No one opposing but the Duke of B—d who said he would not divide the House because if past now, its own absurdity would call for a repeal before the commencement which is 25 March, 1754.

"My Lord Chancellor answered him much warmer than ever he was known to speak. He chiefly levelled at the House of Commons, He acknowledged the friendship of those who supported the Bill there and greatly resented the opposition as Personal but more of it when I see you next. I am sorry to tell you the Archbishop is in a very bad way with an Inflamation in his lungs. Mr. Herring greatly fears his Life : I find Lawry and his wife are well but at Rochester. Dr. Cameron was drawn on a sledge from the Tower, and executed at Tyburn, attended by a greater Mob than has been seen many years ; He fled and was attainted for the Last Rebellion, in which, as we learnt at Carlisle, He bore a great Part ; He came over now undoubtedly on the same Score, having been watched from Paris to Berlin often lately, and last traced from the King of Prussia's Closet to the River Thames in a foreign ship out of which he never came ; The vessel stay'd a week and then sail'd with Him to Scotland where in a few days they secured him having heard of some consultations where he presided.

"Mr Owen's Father Sir Arthur dyed last week in Pembrokeshire. I am going to Sunninghill again for this short vacation before Trinity term fearing it will be the latter end of July before I can set out for Cheshire being engaged in a Cause of consequence that my Lord Chief Justice Lee has fixed for the middle of that month.

The King has this day put an end to the Session. Young Wills tells me your son is not at Hackney but could not say where he has gone. I hope you both enjoy the present fine weather and are very well.

"Your most obed't servant

"Owen Brereton."

"Maryborough,

"*Aug.* 27, 1753.

"Dear Sir,

"I was very glad to find in our way from your Friend Mr. Lloyd, that you were at Erthig. This we should have come to have known, but in truth had no time to lose on the Expedition we had resolved on for this Kingdom, which by our trip to Scarborough, had been necessarily so long delayed. However, Thank God, we got here very well after a safe pleasant, but tedious journey of 38 Hours from Holyhead, my Cozen's Post-chaise awaiting us at Dublin. I soon left for this place without staying to look about me as I propose staying there a fortnight or 3 weeks, when their Parliament meets, when they are in their glory. The Irish have heard that their new Lord Lieut. loves show and Parade as well as his Lady, and intend to prepare for them this winter accordingly.

"I am here nearly in the center of Ireland and yet have not seen a Tree, and indeed very few Hedges, except at Gentlemen's Seats, and even those Trees very trifling ones, the best I have seen are at [ ] whom you may have seen formerly, at [ ] about 16 Irish, (26 English) miles from where I am. It is a pretty place. The Country in general is [ ] The Roads are remarkably fine, all well cemented Gravel. I have not yet seen one yard worse than your Avenue. Their Churches are extremely scarce indeed but their Castles which exactly resemble Tower Steeples are as frequent

as Churches in England. They were formerly the Dwelling Houses of the Irish Gentry for security for themselves above, and their Cattle in a sort of cellar underneath.

"We have no firing but Turf hereabouts, which everyone is selling, and I think is excellent Firing. It is plentiful and cheap for you can never stand anywhere and be far from a Bog.

"The Poor People are poor indeed, and mostly by choice, for very few chuse to work, that can raise a few Potatoes and so many are Popish and would not strike a spike on a Popish Saint's Day, and we all know they are very numerous.

"Victuals are good and cheap, the Venison is excellent, and so plentiful that it is literally true there is not a Cabbin of the most wretched, that has not a [ ] to it.

"Wine is chiefly claret, which at the Inns is poor, but at Gentlemen's houses exceeding good. Good Port is very scarce. They deal little in Malt Liquor, but Cyder supplies the place of Small beer or Ale.

"We have had infinite rains ever since we came here. The Moment the Weather clears up, we sett off for a ramble in the Kingdom, to Limerick, from thence to what is called the Paradise of Ireland, Killarney, a Seat of Kenmare's, in the County of Kerry, from thence to Kinsale, Cork, Cashel and the further South of Ireland.

"I remain dear Sir

"Your very affectionate

"O. Salusbury Brereton."

"Lincoln's Inn,

"*Jan.* 28, 1754.

"Dear Sir,

"I have had no matter of amusement for you or you should have heard from me sooner. We have been

quite a-la-mort all the Xmas Holydays and if it had not been for now and then a Post from Ireland should have nothing to talk of and I am very sorry Matters are carryed so far there as I privately learn they are and no great Prospect at present of setting them to Rights : I little thought some years ago that there would come a time, when the Irish House of Commons should mind nothing but Politicks and the Majority there be against the Court ; and the English parliament just the reverse and amuse themselves with Breachs of Priviledge and Rights of Election, as to the former I mean the Breach of Priviledge, It was complained of by Luke Robinson against some of my Lord Winchelsea's Tenants and was to have been heard last Monday, but was prudently made up that morning else it would have made very warm work, for I never knew greater Sollicitations to Members to attend in my Life and no one could guess the Event as the Division would have been very motly ones and as the Noble Lord joins Sir Edward Dering against Watson in Kent. I wish the affairs in Ireland may be well settled before we get into a War in this part of the world ; you see the French have cajoled us and sent a Fleet to the East Indies and we are preparing to send one after them, so they must come to Blows unless they get their Business done before ours get there. The Behaviour of the French Ministry is talked of very cavalierly here at present and a yacht is actually sent for Lord Albemarle, so they want some conference with him face to face if they don't intend to recall Him. It will be too much to be visited with War and the Plague too and yet I am sorry to say notwithstanding what is in the Gazette that the sickness at Rouen is certainly so, and I have my information from a French Merchant here who has had many letters to confirm it ; . . . [torn off]."

" Lincoln's Inn,
" *Oct.* 29, 1754.

" Dear Sir,

" I call'd upon Knapton, to inquire after the Modern History you wanted, and find 'tis a Translation from the French, intended as a supplement to Rollin. It will consist at least of 20 Volumes, the 3 first of which are to contain China, Japan, and the Moguls Country; but have not yet heard it mention'd by the Learned World. I brought my Father safe to Town in his new Post Chaise, without the least accident, and we travell'd 72 miles in one day, yet did he not find the least Inconveniences with respect to his Complaint. We found the road 20 miles on this side Coventry so bad that the boy could not tell how to drive us safely, the narrow-wheel'd waggoners having maliciously cut all the Coach Quarter away ; They have but 4 horses drawing at a time indeed, but they have 2 or 3 more in their [geers] at the tail of the waggon, which are shifted every 4 miles.

" Mr Brocklebank, who follow'd us to Town, saw this shocking scene near Stony Stratford. One waggoner was driving in the Waggon, but another behind cryes, Dam you, Why don't you follow the resolution we are all come into and quarter I warant we shall make them repeal the Act as they did the Jew Bill, But the first not complying, the last whipped his horses furiously into the Coach quarter, crying, 'Then he would leave him behind.' Brocklebank and company being on Horse-back were immediately beat out of the Road by the Waggon Horses, and by pulling on briskly, escap'd mischief, but a young woman's horse was drove down a Bank, and she herself left on the Road thrown off and run over by both the waggon wheels over her breast ; She lived an Hour only and an Honest Jury at Stony found their Verdict that she dyed an accidental Death. The Gentlemen left their names with the Relations and promis'd to attend

at the Assizes, when summon'd to witness against the Villain.

"I know not whether the Yorkshire Jury which sat on poor Lord Drumlanrig gave a much honester Verdict, for 'tis too true that he shot himself, they say here the cause was, his being Contracted before to another Lady, but I believe the Mother's family can best account for that, as well as Lord Cornbury's shooting himself in France.

"The Politicians here have assign'd over Mr Fox to the Duke of Newcastle for a valuable consideration, so that the Company of Peace will have no chance of a Breach that way. I wish they could as easily stop the French in Virginia, tho' I believe no men will be ship't off, till Mirepoix opens his Budget, nor indeed till the Parliament meets.

"My best Respects to Mrs Yorke. I dined with her Brother Hutton yesterday, and was sorry to find he had got the distemper among his cattle to a violent degree. The Weather has been very fine ever since I came to Town, to my great mortification however shall enjoy a little of it in the country, for I am going to a Merchant's House near Farmingham in Kent for this next week.

"Our Mayor and Bayliffs were chose at Liverpool.

"I wish you and your's all Health, and remain,

"Your obliged Humble Servant

"OWEN BRERETON.

"Note. I never saw my Lord Chancellor look better."

"Lincoln's Inn,

"*December 3rd*, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,

"The Parliament have agreed on two shillings for the Land Tax to everybody's satisfaction. They have had a few Sparring Blows since they met, though

at first they set out with good Humour! You saw in your Evening Advertiser 4 Lines to Beckford, they were occasion'd by a rambling speech of his, the first Debate, which, as usual, was chiefly on the Plantations and their very valuable Exports to this Country, at which Old Horace laugh'd; this raised the Alderman's fury to throw out some bitter taunts against Him, which Horace rally'd finely, and concluded with agreeing about the Exports, but congratulated the House on their late 2 Exports of immense value, (the two Beckfords) which he did not doubt would give immense *Entertainment* to Him, and the House in the course of the Debates.

"The University of Oxford are Mad against Pitt, and Nugent. The former (in the Debate about the Forces) abused them for a Nest of Jacobites, saying He was there this Summer, when a Lady in his Company was singing at a Tavern the song of "God save great George our King," a whole heap of Gowns-men stood publickly in the Street, and join'd in Chorus, putting the word *James* for George all through the song: Nugent, agreed to their having bad Education there but compared the University to a Hen, with Duck eggs which she took great care of for a while, but, let her do what she would, the young Ducks, when got from her, would make for the Water.

"They have not so many Petitions as was expected, there being only 16; The Oxfordshire, which began this day, is Whig and Tory merely, and by the squabbles at the beginning, likely to hold, unless cut off by an untimely fate. The Appleby, Reading, and most of the others are Whig contra Whig, I wish the Latter does not set them all by the ears, for Pitt and Fox and Company and all the Torys are for Lord Vane the old Whigs all for Dod, so it will be a pretty nice affair Our Good Friend at the War Office has had the modesty not to give in his Petition, tho' he had one ready.

" 'Tis rumour'd that Pitt is in a tottering situation, notwithstanding his Speech about Oxford. In the St. Michel Petition, Lord Sandwych, the Duke of Bedford, and [Scawen] support the sitting Members. Lord Falmouth and Lord Edgcumbe are for the Petitioners, who, if we may judge of one Division in their favour to fix a Day, are most likely to succeed.

" Macklin the Player has set up an Oratory like Henly's, which being new is crowded at present, but He has no ability so that it cannot hold long; last night there were swords drawn, and I reckon next night there will be a fight, and then the affair will be put a stop to.

" I hope you received my last, and should be glad of a Line from you. Mrs Lloyd tells me the Lass has been very ill. I hope to hear she is got quite well, and that you and Mrs Yorke (to whom my best respects) continue so.

" After so much Parliament news, I won't sign my name, but remain

" Your much obliged Humble Servant
" B.

" The first sale of East India goods that ever was is just over, they sold on the whole for no less than two hundred and sixty four thousand pounds by publick Auction."

" Petersburg,
" *February* 11, 1755.

" Dear Sir,

" I dont date this from *Civita Petri* as call'd of old, or from Westminster the modern Name, but borrow one from Russia whence at present we have everything, not only Manners and Diversions, but even Weather, which has been severer than ever I felt it in my Days, and learn from some old Philosophers that these last six Weeks have produced more unwholesome Severe Weather

than ever known in this Island, so that the Doctors and Apothecarys have their Hands full, and actually complain of too much to do. I have, thank God, just got rid of them, having had a Cold attended with a Fever, but am now much better. It greived me to be prevented seeing the Embassador's Masquerade * which to the sight was very grand, but dull enough on account of their immediate un-masking : Your Paper tells you some dresses, the tall Figure was Lord Delawar as King James' Porter. That of Eve was out of the Author's Head, for there was no such dress ; Lady Coventry hinted at, was in a Grecian Noble Lady's Dress ; Lady Rockingham was a Sultana Queen. Lady Petersham in a Stage Queen, all three rich with jewels. This latter was to have given 2 hundred pounds for the Loan of more, but her Husband put a stop to it to her great mortification. You may have heard that young Jack Spencer is to be marryd to Miss Poynts. She was in a Slave's dress, with a Diamond Chain from each arm, lock'd to each foot, which He unlock'd with a golden key in the middle of the Room, and then twisted each chain 3 times round each of her arms, but Mrs Franks, Mrs Boheme and Mrs Tomson of the City outshone all the above with jewels. The Latter was in a plain Nun's Dress, but had an Immense Diamond Cross hung to a Diamond Chain. Now lastly for the Russian manners, which have not only been exhibited between Pit, and Sir Thomas Robinson, but has been introduced into many Debates in a certain Grand Assembly more so my Father says, than ever he remembers : The New Interest make no doubt of

* " George Montagu has intercepted the description I promised you of the Russian masquerade. . . . In a few words, there were all the beauties and all the diamonds, and not a few of the uglies of London. . . . Lord Delamere was an excellent mask, from a picture at Kensington of Queen Elizabeth's porter. Lady Caroline Petersham, powdered with diamonds and crescents for a Turkish slave was still extremely handsome."—Horace Walpole, 407, Richard Bentley, Esq.

establishing every Vote, but 4 and carrying their Point as successfully as their Sherif was cleared of bad behaviour which was unanimously. They are upon the Colchester Election in the Committee at Nights. Nothing but War is talk'd of, tho' some wise Heads will aver we shall have no bloody noses. I saw a letter from Dunkirk yesterday, which mention'd that 400 sailors had just been demanded, and sent from thence to Brest. All the Stocks continue to tremble extremely.

"You hear how lucky John Williams has been, not only to be a Welsh Judge, but of the easiest Circuit, and got the Chiefship at once, because Harry did not chuse to pay £3000 more to be re-chose. Harry Hall succeeds him as Attorney, which gives Harry no small satisfaction, and the rather, as he had no competitor.

"It is in a great measure settled between the old Folks as well as the young, that Dick Wilbram is to marry Miss Bootle. He is much to be envyd. She has much wealth, and more merit in my opinion to deserve it.

"I know not whether you may have heard that a villain condemnd at Norwich has confest that he was servant to poor George Shakerley and did actually shoot him, having endeavour'd to rob Him which the Master resisted. I have no other Particulars. I beg my respects to Mrs Yorke. I hope she, you, and the little Lady continue well this inclement season,

"and remain, your obliged friend,

"O. Brereton."

A country election in the olden time! What an opportunity for the pen and pencil of the satirist, what a breaking loose of all the baser passions in half-civilized man! The contested elections of the eighteenth century afforded infinite matter for dispute, and that of Oxfordshire, November 18, 1754, was a particularly flagrant

example. The Sheriff had returned four candidates, Lord Parker, Sir E. Turner, Lord Wenham, and Sir James Dashwood, of whom the two former were supported by the " new " interest, the latter two by the " old." The former had the more powerful friends and in spite of petition, counter petition, complaints of undue elections and double returns, Lord Parker and Sir Edward won and retained their seats.

" *April* 27, 1755.

" Dear Sir,

" The Day I left you, I got to Shrewsbury before Dinner, where I found so much good company that I stayd all that Day and all the next; On Monday an Officer and I hired a Boat, which conveyed us most delightfully to Worcester the same Evening after a very romantick Voyage; on Tuesday we travelled in Post Chaises to Oxford, where I met two Brother Counsellers and last night we four got to London in a Coach to a late Dinner at five o'clock. The Weather proved extremely fine, and the Road actually dusty after I left Flintshire, which near London would have been troublesome, had it not rain'd in the night on Tuesday.

" I found the House of Commons very busy determining the Oxfordshire Election. The first Question was made by Sir Thomas Dashwood, that A.—B.—, a Copy-holder, or Customary Freeholder, had no right to vote, which Question if he carry'd he sayd Wenman and Dashwood must be voted duly elected. Lord Hillsborough opposed him, insisting the previous Question should be put, for though all those sort of Votes were to be rejected, Parker and Turner had an undisputable majority, and upon the Division it was carry'd by 228 against 98, that Sir J. D's Question should not be put so soon after that W and D. were not duly elected, the

consequence of which was that Parker and Turner were duly elected, and no Question was of course put upon it. Sir Cordel Forebrace was to move this day in the House of Commons to express their concern at His Majesty's going abroad by an address, but by a motion of adjournment it was nipt in the Bud. The same Motion was made in the House of Lords by Earl Pawlet, which was opposed by Lord Chesterfield, and on a Division the Noble Earl was on one side, and the whole House of Lords besides, against Him.

"The King puts an End to the Session tomorrow, if possible, or else on Saturday, and he goes abroad on Sunday at furthest.

"There is no further News about War or Peace.

"I remain, your obliged, Humble Servant

"O. Brereton.

"(Note.) Sir J. Dashwood this day said He would move for a Bill next session to give a Liberty to Sheriffs to take any Votes, and return what Member He pleases.

"I gave Mrs Yorke's Letter to Mrs Mainwaring, who was very well."

"Lincoln's Inn,

"*June* 14, 1755.

"Dear Sir,

"So little has occur'd since I wrote last, and I have been so much out of Town, that you have not been troubled sometime.

"I have been at Richmond since last Term visiting the environs of that pleasant Hill. I went a different Ride every morning of about 12 miles. I constantly found something pleasing to see, and though I had seen most of the good Houses in that neighbourhood before, yet this is such an Improving age, that I found them all alter'd without Doors, much for the Better, and was

well satisfy'd in viewing them again. The Letter mention'd in the Post you read of, in your Newspaper, hinted at a design to destroy most of the Royal Family together at the Opera, and they were to go to do the same to the "Fat Man at Windsor": Strict Enquiry is made into it, and £100 reward for further discovery, but no more yet transpiring. I kept some of the ministry up, all one night in examining into the affair.

"In passing sentence on Leheup, the Court consider'd the Losing his Places, which I don't find He is like to do, for there is such a contest to succeed, and the equality of the pretensions so very much alike, the Duke of N. knows not which to disoblige, so Leheup remains in.

"They at last talk of (in earnest) the scheme of building the other Courts, on the right hand side of Westminster Hall, as the Commons Pleas is, and so making the Grand Approach up to the Court of Request, and so, to the Lords and Commons' Houses. They are preparing a Building to receive the Records out of the old Building, the corner of St. Margarets' Lane, in Palace Yard, call'd Hell, which is to be pulled down to widen that Passage.

"Our Weather is extremely fine at present, they began to want Rain, which has now fallen pretty plentifully, but with a very warm sun. I shall leave Town in about 3 weeks, and go to Sunninghill, then to Hillingdon for a little time, but shall not get into Cheshire, I believe, till August.

"I beg my Compliments to Mrs Yorke. I hope you both continue very well, and remain your Obliged Humble Servant

"Owen Brereton."

Joshua Edisbury left no male heirs. John Meller cared not to change his celibate condition. Simon Yorke, more fortunate, had an only son Philip, the first Squire of Erthig born on the estate.

The three first owners of Erthig came into possession in middle life; their childhood is a blank, and nearly all that is known of them is the reflection of their characters in the letters of their friends; there are but few of their own.

With the story of Philip the Chronicle enters a new phase. His whole life is delineated, from the cradle to the grave, not only in his friends' writings but in his own.

Philip was but five years old when he went to a preparatory school at Wanstead kept by Mr. Taylor, and was four years later transferred to Mr. Newcome's at Hackney. A leaf from his pocket-book supplies the following dates.

Left Hackney Feb. 1759. Left Eton, Dec. 1760.
Staid in Wales from Dec. 1760 till April 1762.
Was admitted to Cambridge April 10, 1762.
Discontinued residing at Cambridge and gave up my rooms July, 1764.
Began to keep term in Lincoln's Inn, 1764.
Took my Masters degree in Cambridge, 1765.

Why was this precious only child sent so far from home at an age when most children are in the nursery? It appears to have been the custom at that time. The loss was not his, for he accepted every situation with philosophical calm, and became a universal favourite among his father's friends. Among these, Mr. Richard Woolfe, Mr. Matt. Wymondesold, and a Rev. Mr. Shepherd (who may have been domestic chaplain to the latter gentleman, for they were closely associated) wrote to the anxious parents full and constant accounts of the welfare of their son.

Mr. Hutton, Philip's maternal uncle, paid his school fees. The Lord Chancellor Hardwicke took a kindly interest in his little cousin and godson. Every "exeat" as well as most of the long holidays were spent with his mother's relatives or his father's friends; and during his first absence he did not meet his parents for more than two years.

Mr. Shepherd thus writes.—"Wanstead, *June* 22, 1749. I am but just come from the School where I left Master in good Health and high Spirits, much pleased I believe with his present Situation and as little regarding his absence from Home as any one ever did on first going from it. I hope his Improvement here will answer your Expectations and it will be a great Pleasure to me to give you an Account of it from time to time. I told him I was going to write to his Pappa. He then desired his Duty to Pappa and Mama and whispered to me the Master being present, that I should ask his Mama to send his Silver Waistcoat. . . ." Two months later Mr. Wymondesold takes up the tale. "On Sunday when I passed by the pew where he sat, (having kept his eye on our pew) he was ready to receive us, he took me by the hand and told me he was glad to see me, he was very chearful, he chused chiefly to dine on vegetables which I think a lucky choice in a child. I don't think he has thought of Peggy since you left him." A few years later while spending Xmas with the same kind friend "he was somewhat out of order by eating could plumb pudding for supper," and his wise host then ordained that the school diet should be continued for supper and breakfast, and that dinner should be eaten under his

inspection. Mr. Wymondesold in fact treated him "as his own," and grew more and more attached to "the entertaining child." The young Mr. Wymondesolds "carried him to the Play," the old servants welcomed him, and he was popular in the village he so frequently visited.

Extracts—Richard Woolf

"*June* 15, 1749.

"Dear Sir,

"I yesterday accompanyed young Mr Travers to pay your Son a Visit. We found him hard at his Book and had the Pleasure of having the most agreeable accounts of his behaviour as well from the Mistress of the House as from the School-master. It would take up too much time for me to ennumerate the many instances of his surpriseing behaviour. Mr Travers, when he sees you, will (if his Memory can retaine them) give you a Relation of them. Let it suffice that he is perfectly happy and the most tractable of Children, and knows as well how to lay his Schemes for perfecting his views as the most consomate Polititian. After he was Cleaned and Drest, we took him to Mr Wymondesold's. He has already got to be quite easy in the Family, and well knows to whom and in what manner to pay his Court. He dined there on Sunday, (which he is constantly to do, and on all Holliedays, and walked with Mr Shepherd to Church. Mr Wymondesold thought that after Church was over he would have Returned with the other boys to the School-House, but Phil waited for his comeing out and joyned in the Procession. This being the first Sonday of the young Peoples being down there were in the afternoon a large number of Visitants. Your young man when the Room became pritty ful, retired, and Mr Wymondesold thought he should have seen no more

of him for that day. But when the Room was cleared he returned having retired to Mrs Beck, to whom he expres't his disapprobation of having so much company, and sayed he would not have so much fuss for one hundred Pounds. We delivered him on comeing away to his Playfellows. At parting he pres't me hard to name a day when I would see him again, for as he himself observes great punctuality, he loves to be upon certainty with others. However, he was content with a general answer of coming as soon and as often as I could, and then bid us Farewell, desireing Mr Travers to give his Duty to his Papa and Mamma, and Service to Peggy."

"Note. Phil has come on greatly in his Reading, and will get up to go to School as early as the other Boys, tho' in his case he would be Indulged with an hour longer Sleep.

"I ask't him what nick-name the Boys had given him. He replyed, glouting, 'Wymondesold.'"

"*October* 17, 1749.

"Dear Sir,

"I have your Favour of the 3rd. Instant, and gave directions to Davies to attend Master Phill, and I understood my young Gentleman ordered the Waistcoate to be a Saxon Greene and white metall'd Buttons to the Suit. The Clothes were carry'd to him last Sonday morneing. I gave a letter to Davies when he went to take measure to deliver to Mr Shepard, who, I told Davies, would go with him to the School, and that he would take Mr Shepard's directions, but I find by a letter from Mr Shepard that he left the Letter saying that it required no answer and that Shepard had it not till after Davies had left Phill. I gave orders that the Waistcoat should not be Lepell'd and I dare say it is not so, for the young Sparke on all occasions takes advice. Mr Shepard

writes Phill was to be at Mr Wymondesolds on the Coronation day and to bring his Friend with him, for he says he cannot play on Sondays. You see what Address your Son has, I really believe he can do more than any other person can with the Grand Bashaw, and that was he to go to a great School no one would shift better. I have, according to his Uncle James' orders, directed Davies to carry his bill to him."

"*April* 27, 1751.

"Dear Sir,

"By your's of the 12th. you desire to know the particulars of the Interview between Mrs Hunt and Phil, and whether he seems pleas'd with the Thoughts of being brought down in her Coach. As to the first, you need only imagine that he is never wanting in a proper behaviour and Ingages the admiration of every one who sees him. As to the latter, he no doubt will be pleas'd with his Conveyance down and with seeing you and his Mamma, but he's of that disposition as to be content wherever he is. He had a great deal of Pleasure during his stay at Mr. Lloyd's. He dined twice with Mrs Owen, and the last time she took him to a Play where was Mrs Hunt and half a hundred Chesshire and Welsh Ladys, it being for the benefit of Miss Owen's Dancing Master. The Play was 'The Conscious Lovers.' I was told he was most highly delighted with the scene between the Footman and Chambermaid and clap't his hands and laugh'd so heartily as to draw the eyes of everybody towards him."

Mr. Woolfe was indeed a correspondent worth having, for he writes to the absent parents of the very things they must have most wished to know, and one can fancy Dorothy gloating over the description of the whole theatre watching with sympathetic amusement, the

delight of her five-year-old son at his first play. Little is known about Mr. Woolfe, although he corresponded with Simon for fifteen years, during which time he wrote nearly a hundred letters. The Lincoln's Inn register shows that he came from South Shields ; he used the crest of a wolf's head to seal his letters, and held an appointment as Deputy Clerk for the Duchy of Lancaster. The letters cease as suddenly as they began, and Richard Woolfe disappears into the unknown.

In spite of delays caused by measles, smallpox, and a breaking-out in his face, Philip, having done with his spelling book, and "got into tables," announced his intention of reading his book every day during the Summer holidays, "and so get before Jack Smith (whom he calls his rival) when he gets back."

In 1752 having doubtless exhausted the resources of the Infant Academy at Wanstead, he was removed to Hackney. His arrival is announced by Mr. Newcome on April 28.

"Sir,

"I defer'd an Answer to your oblidging Letter that I might at the same time inform you that Master Yorke was come into my family, and had begun to give us some prospect of what we may expect in the proper time from him. I find him of a very lively active temper, capable of doing his business with little application. He plays with great vigour and courage. I think he is of a very tractable disposition and will not want any severity. I see nothing at present in him but what gives me an agreable expectation. You may always depend on our care of him and of a faithfull account of our success. Our vacation will begin soon and continue

until June 1. Master is quite well and joins his duty to our compliments to your Lady and self.

"I am, Sir,

"Your faithfull Humble servant,

"HENRY NEWCOME."

"Duchy Office,

"*June* 27, 1752.

"DEAR SIR,

"I was to see Master Phill yesterday. He was very well and says he likes Hackney better than Wanstead. He wanted to see his Uncle James to have leave to learn to draw. I ventured to tell him he might begin next Week. Mr Newcome speaks well of him and says he has a great deal of Art which I dare say you would perceive in many Instances when he was at Erthigg.

"There was a dreadful Fire this Morning in Lincolns Inn Square, sayed to begin in Mr Wilbraham's Chambers, No. 10, under Mr Yorke. The whole Stair Case is nothing but a Shell, and nothing saved from any of the Chambers save Mrs Harley's. Mr Yorke made his escape in his shirt to Mr Clark's; Master Sawyer, in his Night gown only to the Coffee House. Mr. Hoskins likewise got off safe and no Person received any personal hurt. The ground Chambers, No. 11, and one pair of Stairs not burnt to a Shell; but the 2 pair and Garretts only a Shell. I have not time to add more, but that I think it a long while since I had the Pleasure of hearing from you. . . .*

"R. WOOLFE.

"P.S. Is Mr Lloyd dead, or only asleep?"

* I. The lives of Mr. C. Yorke and four other gentlemen were probably saved by an old gentleman coming from the tavern, who found the porters breaking open Mr. Wilbraham's door, and with much difficulty stopt them till they had waked the gentlemen above stairs, who had scarce got downstairs, without their clothes, when the fire burst

"Hackney,
"*June* 30*th*, 1753.

"SIR,

"I was sorry that I did not upon my return home on last Saturday find Master Yorke at School. It was after that I had left home that a little swelling was discovered under his arm, which Mr Hutton had sent for Mr Bell the Surgeon to examine, who had laid it open. He is now come again and is very well and uses this opportunity to thank his Mama for the most acceptable present which I brought him, which is by agreement to be in my keeping, and given with prudence. We join our Complements and thanks to your Lady and you for the most agreable entertainment we enjoyed at Erthig, which place I shall often think of as the most agreable I have been at.

"I saw Mr Charles Yorke yesterday, who is equally charm'd with your Seat, and made many enquiries about you.

"You find by the papers that the Party have been attempting to raise fresh disturbances in the Highlands. I doubt not but your neighbours at the opening of the White Rose are acquainted with most particulars of those

through the door and set the whole staircase on a flame at once. "He (Charles) has lost every thing, and came home to me almost as naked as he came into the world; but what affects him most is the loss of his library of books and all his manuscripts and papers, among which were my Lord Somers papers." This was the unique historical collection of the great Lord Somers, and had been removed from Bellbar to Charles Yorke's chambers to be annotated and catalogued.—See "The Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, P. C. Yorke," vol. iv., p. 179.

II. "The great fire at Lincolns Inn is likely to afford new work for the lawyers, in consequence of the number of deeds and writings which have been consumed. Mr. Yorke, the Chancellor's son, had a great collection of Lord Somers papers, many relating to the assassination plot and by which, I am told, it appears the Duke of Marlborough was deep in the schemes of St. Germains."—Horace Walpole's Letters.

designs. This was the third time that Dr. Cameron has been in Scotland since he had been out-law'd.

"We all join our Compliments, and Respects, and thanks to your Lady and you.

"I am your faithfull and obliged Humble servant,

"H. NEWCOME."

Eleven years after the birth of Philip came a little daughter to take her place in the empty nurseries at Erthig Hall.

Congratulations on the birth of ANNE JEMIMA YORKE

"*Saturday Noon. June 29th*, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,

"I most heartily and sincerely congratulate you, Mrs Yorke and all your friends on the birth of your Daughter; and my best wishes are, (and better I cannot have) that she may make her future Husband as good a Wife as her Mother is to you.

"If you want a God-Father, I am ready to perform that Office, but if you are supplied with one, in your own mind, I hope there will be more occasions for me to offer myself; for I am glad of all opportunities of testifying to you that I am your

"Affectionate friend and humble Servant

"EDWARD LLOYD.

"Note. My Compliments to Miss Myddelton, and all friends. I shall drink a Bumper extraordinary."

Philip was spending his summer holidays at Lockinge when his Mr. Wymondesold announced this important item of home news asking him at the same time as to his liking "a brother or sister"; but the young philosopher

was not to be drawn, and "All the same to me" was the immediate reply.

PHILIP YORKE *to his father* SIMON

"Hackney,
"*January* 10, 1756.

"HONOURED SIR,

"You should have received my letter before, but being quite full of play, I forgot to send it, but hope you will excuse it. I spent my holidays very pleasantly, the Young Mr Wymondesolds carried me to 2 Plays, Barbarossa, and the Rehearsal, both of which I was very much entertained with. My Cousin Lawry has carried me to see Lord Chancellor, Lord Royston and Mrs Jones, all which desire their best respects to you and Mama, Little Sister, Mrs Jones, and Mr Jones, and the young Ladies especially. I have been over Westminster Bridge two or three times going and coming from Lambeth. It is a very fine place and worth your coming to see. All your friends at Wanstead desire their compliments to you, Mama, and Little Sister. I am very well, which I hope you all are at Erthig. Therefore must conclude with duty to Papa, Mama, and Jemima, and my compliments to Betty Radcliffe.

"Your most affectionate and dutiful Son,
"PHILIP YORKE.

"P.S. Pray desire my Mama to send me my half guinea as I left with her."

"Hackney,
"*Feb.* 9, 1756.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I return you a great many thanks for your kind present which you was so obliging as to send me. I have not as yet tasted it, but I don't doubt but that it will

prove good. Pray Sir, tell my Mama that I saw my Uncle James about a fortnight ago, and that I have spoke to him about my stocks which he has ordered to be made. I hope you are all well at Erthig as I am.

"I will conclude with duty to Papa, Mama and Jemima.

"Your most dutiful son,

"PHILIP YORKE.

"I have got into a new Form, pray my compliments to Miss Patty Middleton and all friends."

Among the many perverted creeds of the modern reformer is that which levels abuse at an essentially English institution—the public school. "Home training," cry the malcontents, "is better; the day school education is more useful and less expensive." But book learning alone does not make the man. Moral discipline is most effectually administered by equals, habits of self-reliance and self-control are not fostered by home life, and the splendid Englishmen who have conquered the world are the product of the English public school. Friendship also is the outcome of that daily companionship in work and play, when enthusiasm is undimmed by disappointment, and generous admiration not yet crushed out by the inevitable struggle of the "Battle of Life." Common work and interest, dangers encountered, difficulties overcome, may develop intimacy and affection in after years; but the friend of a man's lifetime is the chosen companion of his school and college days:

When all the world was young, lad,
And all the trees were green,

And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a Queen.

Philip was fortunate in his choice. Thomas, the son of Judge Birch, became to him as a brother, and like a son in his devotion to Dorothy Yorke in her widowhood.

From Hackney young Philip proceeded to Eton, to remain however only three terms. Perhaps the family exchequer was exhausted, Erthig being always an expensive place to keep up.

The following two years are a blank. How Philip occupied himself, how he continued his education, which certainly he must have done, it is impossible to say. The curtain which falls on the school boy, rises on the undergraduate.

PHILIP YORKE *to his father* SIMON YORKE

"Brook Street,
"*January* 25, 1763.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I have been endeavouring (to the Improvement of my knowledge and Understanding (to wear with my Steps the thresholds of the Wise, the Stairs thereto leading may have suffered, the thresholds remain untrod. I have called three several times at my Lord Hardwicke's but in vain; three fruitless Applications to Mr. John Yorke's Knocker, two to Mr. Jones. Got in at once in St. James Square. Lord Royston has been ill with the Gout; he enquired much after the Family at Erthig and was (considering his Cold manner) very Civil; hoped to see me again during my Stay in town. Lord Grey and their young Ladyships well. To get in at Bloomsbury Square in the morning would be impossible, I shall endeavour to catch the Attorney General to-

morrow evening, being engaged to dine today with Mr. Brereton in Soho Square. I shall call on my Lord Hardwicke to-morrow morning, my Visitations will then draw to a period and I propose revisiting Cambridge very soon.

"The publick Lectures of our College which employ during the Term only 3 hours in the day, are neither extraordinary clever or Entertaining. Cicero's Tusculan Disputations, Saunderson's Algebra, employ the morning Hours, 1 Hour to each, one Hour of Logick in the Evening, these studies are indeed good enough in themselves but the whole or greater part of the College Attending but with no good Attention, are lightly skimmed over, and no great Improvement is to be attain'd. The Recess of their Academick Exercises I have endeavoured to employ to some advantage. The Bishop of Lincoln in a Private conversation the other day at College enquiring my Intentions I acquainted him I was already[1] * * * * * of Lincolns Inn, he then particularly recommended the study of History Ancient and Modern * * * * Basis of Law; Velleius Paterculus commences * * * * the first and obscure Ages of the Romans * * * carries it far down, Tacitus takes and continues the Clue. This latter Author from his concise and laconick Stile is peculiarly obscure, at least to my Faculty of resolving: I never read this Author at school, Livy, Paterculus, Sallust and the rest require but half the Pains. Now Sir I should think it worth the Extraordinary annual expense of £20 to take a Private Tutor from whom I shall receive a private lecture every day both in and out of term and in the Study's best approve. Mr Coleman I am inclin'd to think will attend in that Capacity. I should be glad to receive your Opinion of this matter as soon as possible directed to Cambridge.

[1] N.B.—In the original letter the parts here marked by asterisks are torn away.

"My Duty to my Mother and Love to Ann. Best respects to Mrs Maiwaring.

"I am, Hon. Sir,

"Your dutiful son,

"PHILIP YORKE.

"P.S. I have forwarded you by the Chester Fly a bundle of politicks.

"Jack Edwards has just called here, desires his compliments."

"Bene't College,

"*December* 19, 1763.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I consider it not as a difficulty but as an absolute impossibility for a pen of a Masculine Gender to compose a Cambridge letter even of a masculine length formed of present matter and Intelligence. I have before mentioned the barreness of this spot in that respect, and from thence claim the following Subject. The Term and lectures ended on Friday last. The Subjects of the Lecturer were remarkably various; one Hour in Hydrostaticks, another in Aristotle's Rhetorick, another in Locke's essay concerning Human Understanding, and my private Lectures, 1 hour, I have chiefly spent in Cicero. On these different subjects more I confess have I read than digested. When I consider Locke's subject as a subject in itself of a very daring and new Nature, I also consider the very great merit of the Author for the lights he has thrown upon it, but being open to Conviction am also conscious of many Absurdities. Mr Locke very modestly to this purpose concludes his first Book: I profess no more than to lay down candidly and freely my own Conjectures concerning a subject lying somewhat in the dark without any other Design than an unbiased enquiry after truth and I appeal to men's unprejudiced Observations wether the Principles I proceed on are

true or false. I very much admire his Introduction altho his Definition of an Idea (at the end of it) is very obscure and I think will be found false. The first Book disproves Innate Principles, Practical or Speculative, this is effected by a multiplicity of words when the proof itself requires very few, viz., Ideas are the Copies of our Perceptions and therefore cannot be innate ; no Innate ideas, then no Innate Principalls. Principles are Propositions made up of Ideas, consequently no Innate Principles Practical or Speculative. All Ideas come into the mind by Sensation or Reflection ; Perception may be called an Impression and is distinguished from an Idea, which is a less lively perception, of which we are conscious when we reflect on any of our sensations. An Idea (as the Greek word from whence it is immediately derived signifies) is the Image or Representation of that Perception, consequently of a very different nature to Perception itself ; for example, I find by perception that the table I write upon possesses Solidity and Extension, but remove the table from my sight and then I have the Idea or image of its extension and solidity ! Mr Locke by confounding together Ideas and Perceptions and in some places using them as synonomous terms renders himself absolutely unintelligible. Mr Locke also asserts in his first book that the soul does not always think ; he is certainly right, but his reasonings amount not always to Proofs. To say if a man always thought he would be able to recollect the thoughts of his Sleep, is in fact saying nothing, since we must be all sensible how many of our waking thoughts are in an instant irretrievably forgot ; The following is reason sufficient to his purpose ; viz. If the Soul is not conscious of thinking at the very instant it is supposed to think, it is clear it does not think at all. His Definition of Memory requires much unfolding. He attributes alone to Memory what belongs to two other distinct powers of the mind, viz. Imagina-

tion and Reminiscens: Imagination revives the Idea, Memory recollects names and Reminiscens convinces us that what we perceive at any particular instant, is the same with that which we perceived before. Locke attributes memory to Brutes which certainly belongs not to them, Reminiscens does, and is the Power by which birds learn tunes and many other Instances. Abstract Ideas (if there are any) proceed not either from Sensation or Reflection but are produced by a power of the mind which may be called Abstraction; a power I cannot myself conceive as I can have no Idea of a Genus without fixing on a Particular, nor think of Horses in general without annexing my Ideas to a particular Horse. This much at present for Locke, what I have further to offer on this head I shall reserve; as the subject of another Epistle having yet Affairs to mention which will extend this to an unusual length. Mr Cust sets out for Belton next Thursday and according to Promise I attend him: Our stay will be short, since we purpose revisiting Bene't by the 3rd of next month. If you please Sir to forward me to Belton, by the return of the Post, a part of my next Quarterly payment; a Bank note of ten pound might be enclosed with safety in a letter directed to me, Lady Cust's at Belton, near Grantham, Lincolnshire if more precaution is necessary it might be split and sent by different successive Posts so as to catch me at Belton. Affairs are in much combustion here. Lord Royston is supposed to have the greater party of open favourers. I very much fear the Election will come on soon. Lord Hardwicke was the end of last week attacked by a very dangerous disorder called a 'Thrush' and we every instant expect bad accounts. The Election of Lord Sandwich in case it takes place must prove an everlasting blot to this University, a man of the most debauched principals and exploded Character. I hear the Archbishop of Canterbury strongly countenances Lord Roy-

ston; it is generally thought that if Lord Royston accustomed himself to the least popularity he must have inevitably carried it but that is yet to be determined.

"I am, Honoured Sir,

"Your dutiful son,

"PHILIP YORKE.

"P.S. I lately received a very civil letter from Mr Todd. My thanks wait on Anne for hers which I think to answer from Belton. My Duty attends my Mother. Love To Anne."

Lord Sandwich "the wicked Earl" enjoyed the smiles and extended his protection to the notorious Fanny Murray, and among his younger rivals (so it is said) was Sir Joseph Yorke afterwards Baron Dover.

One or two letters though addressed to Philip find their appointed nook among his father's correspondence.

Time passes on with imperceptible swiftness, and the little maid whose birth was announced only a few pages previously was now nine years old and writing to the big brother who in spite of his affected indifference soon learned to love and take the greatest interest in the sister so much younger than himself.

"Erthigg,

"*December* 13, 1763.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"My Mamma thanks you for her Letter, and orders me to write in her stead. Papa, and Mamma are well, and send their love to you. John Jones has made a new Flower Garden, and when you go to London, desires you will send an Ounce of Polyanthus seeds, and a few Anemony, and Ranunculus roots. Your Colts and

setting Dogs are well, and Speck as cross as ever ; one Hare has been sent to my Uncle James, since you went.

" I am, dear Brother your affectionate Sister,

" Anne Jemima Yorke.

" (Note) When you see Uncle James, pray give my duty to him."

The marriage of " Jacky " otherwise Mr. John Lawry having taken place in 1749 it is quite in the natural order of events that fifteen years later he should be the father of a school-boy son, a son, too, who inherited his father's talents as a finished scribe. Yet the precocity of the young gentleman is amazing, and his letter to his cousin who was five or six years older than himself offers such an extraordinary contrast to Philip's own letters written to his father two years before.

Simon Lawry *to his cousin* Philip Yorke

" Great Russel Street,

" *April* 20, 1765.

" I hope it will not interrupt my dear Cousin Yorke too much in the planting of his trees and planning his Green-House just to enquire after his, My Uncle, Aunts and Miss Yorke's healths, as I think it is a great while since you went in to Denbighshire, and we have not heard anything of you ; to be sure you have had very fine weather for the works without doors, tho' not as Agreable for you to stand to see your Workmen perform them, if you have had as much rain in your part of the world as we have here ; You will perhaps be surprized to hear that I am still in Russell Street, but my Sister's being inoculated kept Mama and Papa in town longer than they intended ; and now we expect my Uncle and

Aunt Herring next week, and I stay on purpose to have the pleasure of seeing them. They will not stay but a few days and when they return Cousin Peggy goes with them to Mongeham, for she is still with us. I am almost ashamed to ask the Favor I wish to do my dear Cousin, which is, as I have a great desire of Learning to Ride on Horseback, and have saved all the presents my friends have been so kind to give me, since I had the Small Pox, in order to purchase a little horse, and as I have heard none are prettier than the welch ones; if you would be so very good, if you can meet with one you think would suit me, to buy, and send it by a safe Conveyance; I should be for ever obliged and will very thankfully repay all charges when I have the pleasure of seeing you again, by which time I hope to be a pretty good Horseman.

"I hope you will pardon this trouble, but your being allways so good natured and obliging gave me courage to take the liberty.

"I saw the Procession of the Lords that attended at Lord Byron's tryal and his Lordship himself. It was a fine sight and I am to see the Hall.

"I beg you will present my duty to Uncle and Aunt and compliments to Miss Yorke. Papa and Mama desire theirs to them and you as does Miss Lawry and your most Obedient and affectionate,

"Simon Lawry.

"As you love planting I make bold to send you from Ovid a collection of Forest trees and other plants though my Papa assures me that all of the larger are already found in the woods and gardens of Erthig: but if there are any in my catalogue of the smaller kind, which you have not already, they are much at your service.

"The succincta comas hirsutaque vertice pinus I think is a neat description of the pine and Fir kind."

DOROTHY YORKE *to her son* PHILIP

"*November 30th*, 1765.

"DEAR PHIL,

"As I know you will be desirous to hear from us after our great movement am not wil'ing to miss this Post the interruption of many morning visitors. We had a fine day and very easy ride here last Monday, and quiet dining with only Mr Allen, Mr Judge Williams, and Mr Seeman, the first marry'd both his son and daughter at Bristol on Tuesday. All the Bunbury family with Sir Charles and Lady Sarah, whose behaviour is quite pleasing as well as Person. Thursday she and Lady Grosvenor graced the card assembly and made a dance. I think I never see so full a one. Your acquaintance, young Clark danced with Lady Sarah; he is a very genteel person. Mr. Thomas Hunt desires his service and excuse for putting your visit off, the reason he sayes we are well acquainted with in chief is his Courtship at that time and Marriage which is to be soon, and then they come to London. The Sisters are very happy about it. Birch left Erthig on Saturday and proposed staying some Days with Mr Tayleur.

"We see the cross hedge up on that evening in Mr Roberts feild. The Bladys had not done the Fosse. Caesar was in a vast Bustle a few days before I came away, proposed to the servants' board wages, half a crown weekly, the maids, and 3s the men. They did not relish this, and your Father desires it might be laid aside if disagreable to them, but they came with a request to me that they might have 4s the men, and 3s the maids, so I believe it is agreed, though Caesar has not answered my Note to him. They are to find nothing for themselves but ale, sugar, and bread, and they have some small stock to begin with. This will prevent strangers soaking there whilst we are gone, as too many have got

on that footing at Erthig, Caesar writes me word. Liberality of Living causes Straitness of Money. He sends me observations upon Housekeeping when the Family was in London in the year 1741. This foolish affair spoil'd my rest for a night or 2, but whilst I keep house I shall never pinch my Servants. A large house in Wales is the worst thing in the world to manage. So much for household stuff. I find your father intends staying here till your coming down. I think he will be tired before that time of Company and cards which he says he now takes no pleasure in. Would we had a house half as good as your Uncles in London. There I think we should be quiet. Ann is the happy person. She is all life and spirits in expectation of her Ball, and I thank God we are all in health, and our Landlord in very good humour. I am very sorry my Brother feels any twitch of the Gout. You will present our proper respects to him, and other friends that are so good as to ask for us. Lord Grosvenor is much out of health, his Lady lead him so great a Fox Chase from 6 in the morning to 8 at night, in the rain the whole time, a few weeks ago, that he has not been well since. They intend for London soon. We beg you to make a visit to them for us in acknowledgement for Venison, and likewise to Mr Myddelton, when he is in town.

"Your Father and Sister join with me in kind love to you.

"I am, dear Phil, your ever affectionate Mother,

"D. YORKE."

This letter of Dorothy's is an important one, for the Servants' Board wages are frequently referred to later on. These wages included only the extras, and ale was probably drunk then at every meal. Meat, vegetables, eggs, butter, and cheese were provided by the estate.

The letter also, though unconsciously, warns the reader of impending change. "Your Father is tired," says Dorothy; he was weary in body and in mind, tired of society and even of his beautiful home, and soon after this he "fell asleep."

* * * *

In the same vault are deposited the Remains of
SIMON YORKE OF ERTHIG, ESQUIRE,
A pious, temperate, sensible Country Gentleman,
of a very mild, just and benevolent character,
as the concern for his death did best testify;
An advantage which Amiable Men have over great Ones.
He died July 28th, 1767, aged 71.

His mihi dilectum, Nomen Manesque verendos
His saltem accumulem donis et fungar amico
Munere; non raptus, quamvis Pater optime totus
Eriperis; redit Os placidum, Moresque benigni,
Et venit ante oculis, et pectore vivit Imago.

END OF VOL. I

Mr Moss a print p. 20
Gentry family portraits shown p. 148
Jeffreys portraits p. 220
Wright "a painter" p. 258 cf p. p. 252
Picture at Burleigh House top 264/5"

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